



RELIGIO STOICI.

With a friendly
ADDRESSE
To the
PHANATICKS
Of all *Seets* and *Sorrs*.

ACTS I. 11.

*Ye men of Galilee, why stand
ye gazing up into heaven?*

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THE
STOCKS

Friendly
ADDRESSE

To the
PHANATICKS
Of all Sects and Sorts.

THe mad-cap Zealots of this
bigot Age, intending to
mount heaven, Elias-like, in
Zeals fiery Chariot, do, like
foolish Phaeton, not onely
fall themselves from their
flaming seat, but by their furious over-driving
invelap the World in unquenchable combustions;
and when they have thus set the whole
Globe on a Blaze, this they term A new light.
It is remarkable in Scripture, that Jehu, who
drove furiously, and called up Jehonadab to

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See what zeal he had for the house of God, was, even at that instant, doing it more wrong then ever was done to it by unconcerned Gal-lio, who flantingly cared for none of these things. And that none of all the Apostolick Conclave desired ever fire might rain from above upon mis-believers, except the sons of Zebedee, who immediately thereafter, arrived at that pitch of vanity, as to desire to sit in heaven upon Christs right and left hand. And that Peter, who was the first who did draw a sword in his Masters quarrel, was likewise the first who denyed him. Firy Zeal blows soon up such combustible matter as the sons of Zebedee: and that flash being spent and evaporat, a fall follows, as befel Peter. As that body is hardly curable, which entertains such ill-suited neighbours as a cold Stomack and a hot Liver: so, the body of the visible Church may be now concluded to be in a very distempered condition, when its Charity waxeth cold, and its Zeal hot, beyond what is due to either: and these Feverish fits of unnatural Zeal, wherewith the Church is troubled in its old and cold age, betokens too much that it draws neer its last period.

The inconsiderableness likewise of our differences, and inconsiderateness wherewith they

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they are pursued, induces me to believe, that the Zeal now a-la-mode, is not that holy fire which is kindled by a coal from the Altar, but is that Ignis fatuus, or wildfire, which is but a Meteor piec'd up of malignant Vapours, and is observed to frequent Churchyards after then other places.

I am none of those who acknowledge no Temples, besides these of their own heads. And I am of opinion, that such as think that they have a Church within their own breasts, should likewise believe, that their heads are Steeples, and so should provide them with bells. I believe that there is a Church-militant, which, like the Ark, must lodge in its bowels all such as are to be saved from the flood of condemnation: but, to chalk out its bordering lines, is beyond the Geography of my Religion. He was infallible, who compared Gods Spirit to the wind which bloweth where it listeth: we hear the sound of it, but know not whence it comes, or whither it goeth. And the name graven upon the white stone, none knows but he who hath it. Eli concluded Hannah to be drunk, when she was pouring out her soul before her Maker: and Elias believed, that the Church in his days, was stinted to his own person;

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and yet God told him, that there were seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed their knees to Baal : Why then should any private Christian determine, magisterially, that, wherein the greatest of Prophets erred ?

The Reed wherewith the Temple was to be measured, Revel. 11. 2. was onely entrusted to an Angel ; and yet he had not in commission to measure the Court that was without, because it was given to the Gentiles. And albeit, Revel. 7. the number of the Jews who were saved is determined ; yet, the number of Gentiles is left indefinite, and said to be numberless.

There is nothing more ordinary, then for each Nation to confine the Church within themselves : And in that Nation again, one corner will have themselves the Sanctum Sanctorum of that onely Temple ; albeit our Saviour in his Gospel assures us, that men shall come from all corners of the world, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And John in his Revelation tells us, that multitudes of all Nations, Kindreds and Families, were seen following the Lamb. Upon this same block do these likewise stumble, who put the bolt of their uncharitableness upon

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upon the gates of Heaven, to debar whole Professions, such as Lawyers and Physitians, from entering in thereat; notwithstanding that the above-cited place tells us, that there were only twelve thousand of the tribe of Levi the Priest chosen, and the like number was prickt in the tribe of Judah, the Law-giver: Aaron the Priest did mould the golden Calf, and not Moses the Judge; and Korah and Dathan were Levites, and yet mained against their Magistrates.

I say not this to disparage that holy Function: for none shall wish Aarons rod to flourish more then my self; and ordinarily, these who love not to touch the Lords Ancients, will likewise be sure to do his Prophets no harm; but, I say it to take off an aspersian which hath stain'd too long, and too unjustly, those of my own profession. Is not the Church our common Mother? albeit, I confess, she is likewise their Nurse, in a more particular way; and since there is Heavenly Mannah enough to alimment us all, why should Christians deny to admit their brethren to an equal partage?

It grieves me sore to see my Mother the Church tortur'd like Rebecca, by carryng
A 4 stragling

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struggling twins in her pained bowels. And seeing all Christians are but pilgrims here, I admire that these pilgrims should leave off to journey, and stand skirmishing and fighting with all such as will not travel their road. And albeit we acknowledge, that the Spirit of God takes paines, and is sufficient for leading all men in the way wherein they should walk; yet, we must compell them, as if either He needed our help, or we resolved to share with him the glory of their conversion. Thus God (who loves us all infinitely better then any one of us doth another) leaves us, upon our own hazard, a freedome in our choise, albeit we poor miscreants compell one another, denying to our fellow-creatures that freedome which he allows all the Creation. I wish we would consider how each man eats, drinks, cares for his family, and performs all common duties, rational enough without any compulsion; and yet, in the affairs of Religion, wherein doubtless man is led by a far more infallible assistance, there are many slips committed; daily and grossly, notwithstanding of all the pains taken, and force used by one man towards another. Thus it fares with us as with Patients, whom when the Physitian stints to a narrow dyet, then they loath

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loath even that food, which their unreined appetite would never have rejected. And this makes me apt to believe, that if Laws and Law-givers did not make Hereticks vain, by taking too much notice of their extravagancies, the world should be no more troubled with these, then they are with the Chimera's of Alchymists and Philosophers. And it fares with them as with Tops, which, how long they are scourged, keep foot and and run pleasantly, but fall how soon they are neglected and left to themselves.

In order to which, it was wittily observed by our great King James the Sixth, that the Puritans of his age strove with him, and yet ceded at first, in a difference between them and the Shoee-makers of Edinburgh: For, not onely pleases it their humour to contend where they gaine honour and can lose none, but likewise, by contesting with Monarchs, they magnifie to the people their pious courage, assuring the world, that such attempts require a particular assistance from Heaven; and when their jingling hath extorted some concessions from the Magistrate, (as ordinarily it doth) then they press that success

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as an infallible mark of the Jure-divinship of their quarrel. Albeit, I confess, that when these, not only recede from the canonized Creed of the Church, but likewise incroach upon the Laws of the State, then as of all others, they are the most dangerous; So, of all others, they should be most severely punished.

Opinion kept within its proper bounds, is a pure act of the minde: and so it would appear, that to punish the body for that which is a guilt of the soul, is as unjust as to punish one relation for another. And this blood-thirsty zeal, which hath reigned in our age, supposes our most mercifull God to be of the same temper with these pagan Deities, who desired to have their Altars gored with blood; and being devils themselves, delighted in the destruction of men: whereas the Almighty, who delights not in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live, hath left no warrant upon holy Record, for persecuting such as dissent from us; but even then when He commands that the Prophets, who tempt others to idolatry, should be slain; yet, speaks He nothing of punishing these who were seduced by them.

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And why should we shew so much violence in these things whereof we can shew no certain evidence? as ordinarily we cannot in circum-fundamental debates. Are we not ready to condemn to day, as Phanatick, what yesterday was judged Jure-divino? and do not even those who persecuted others for their opinions, admire why they should be, upon that score, persecuted themselves? So that (victory depending upon event) we legitimate the persecutions, to be used by others, against our selves, by the persecutions used by our selves against others. Our Saviour forbids us to pluck up the tares, lest the wheat be pulled up with it; and how can the most pious persecuters know, that the Saints are not destroyed with the Sinners?

It is remarkable, that our Saviour disarmed zealous Peter, even when he was serving Him in person, in his greatest straits, and against the profligate of His enemies, the Jews: and that to prevent the irregular zeal even of the first and best of Christians, the blessed Apostles, their divine Master thought it fit to arme them not with swords, but with scrips, and to root out of their hearts all thoughts of violence, did oft inculcate in them, that His King-
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dom was not of this world; convincing them by an excellent argument, that He had no need of arms or armies; for else He could have commanded thousands of Angels. Did ever God command the Jewes to war against any neighbouring nation because they were Pagans? (a quarrel which would have lasted till all the world had been conquered:) Or, did our Saviour leave in legacy to his servants, that they should force others to turn proselytes? which doubtless he had done, if he had resolved to allow such a rude mean of conversion. All which makes me admire, why in our late Troubles, men really pious, and naturally sober, could have been so transported, as to destroy whom they could not convince, and to perswade these who were convinced, that Religion obliged them to destroy others.

My heart bleeds when I consider how scaffolds were dyed with Christian blood, and the fields covered with the carcases of murdered Christians: and it's probable, that there were more damned by unprepared deaths, in the fields, then were saved by peeping Sermons in incendiary Churches: and in this, I admire the clemencie of our Royal Master, who, albeit His Cause was more
just

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just then theirs, albeit He might have convinced them by obtruding to them their own practices; yet, bath rather chosen to command with his Scepter, then his Sword. But, if the glory of God were the mark at which these do level, why bestow they not their zeal, rather in converting such as scarce know or acknowledge that there is a God? And why are they more enraged against these who agree with them in most things, then these who dissent from them in all? Take not Christians more pains to refuse one another, then to convince Gentiles? And stand not some Episcopists and Presbyterians at greater distance, then either do with Turks and Pagans? And to evidence, that rather humour then piety occasions our differences, we may easily perceive, that the meaner the subject is, the heat is always the greater.

If I had ever known so much as one whose faith had been the Trophy of a debate, I should allow of debates in matters of Religion: but seeing men cannot be convinced by Miracles, it were ridiculous to press Conversion by Arguments. All the Divines in Europe could not press the best-founded of their controverted and polemick truths, with so much Scripture, or so many miracles as our blessed Saviour

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vour did his own Divinity (which is the foundation of all truths) and yet the Jews and almost all the world besides, slighted this infallible doctrine. And to evidence that there is a season of Grace, independent from arguments, did not many thousands turn proselytes at Peters Sermon? whom all our Saviours Homilies and miracles could not perswade. If one should say, that the testimony of a few fishermen should not be believ'd in a matter of so great consequence, as is the salvation of the whole world, especially when they did depone as witnesses, in a matter wherein both their honour and livelihood was concerned, might not this stagger some mean Christians? And yet I believe these truths so much the more, because such as these were its first assertors: for, certainly it is one of the greatest of miracles, that so few, and so illiterate persons were able to convince the whole world. Thus we see, that one may account that a miracle, which another looks upon as a folly; and yet, none but Gods Spirit can decide the controversy. Matters of Religion and Faith, resembling some curious Pictures, and Optick Prisms, which seem to change shapes and colours, according to the several stances from which the aspicient views them.

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The balance of our judgements hath catch'd such a bruise by Adams fall, that scarce can we by them know the weight of any argument. But, which is worse, there is as great a defect in our partial weighing, as in the scales themselves: for, when we take either the pro or con of any Controversie into our Patronage, we throw always in arguments into that scale, wherein our own opinion lies, without ever taking leisure to conclude what may be alledged for the antipode proposition: and then, when we receive an answer, our invention is busied, not in pondering how much conviction it hath in it, but by what slight it may be answered: and thus either passion, interest, or frequent meditation, are still the weights which cast the balance.

This fiery zeal hath likewise made another pimple flush out in the face of the Phanatick Church, and that is, a conceit that the Saints have the only right to all Gods creatures, the wicked being only usurpers, and not masters of them: But, I have heard this opinion (so beastly is it) confuted by Baalam's Ass, who could tell its Master, Am not I thine own Ass? When Aaron and the people did covenant without Moses, then every man did bring his ear-rings to make

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up the golden Calf. And we have lived in an Age, wherein we have seen our Countrymen, like the Chaldeans, take the furniture both of the Temple and of the Kings house, and carry them away to their Babylon of confusions; and in an Age wherein sober men were forced to lend Moneys, to buy for their own arms the heavie shackles of slavery;

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.

Religion doubtless aims at two great designs; one is like the first Table, to perswade us to adore God Almighty. Another is to perswade us, like to the second Table, to love our Neighbour, and to be a mean to settle all these jealousies, and compesce all these animosities which Interest might occasion: and this appears by the Doxologie jubilyed by the Angels at our Saviours birth, Glory to God, and peace and good-will towards men. And therefore, as every private Christian should be tolerated by his fellow-subjects to worship God inwardly according to his conscience: so all should conspire in that exterior Uniformity of Worship, which the Laws of his Country enjoyn. The first remark which God made of us after the Creation,

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tion, was, that it was not fit for man to be alone; there was only one Ark amongst the Jews by Gods own appointment. And seeing the Gospel terms the Church Christ's Spouse, it were absurd to think that He will divorce from her upon every error or escape; especially, seeing His blessed mouth hath told us, that under the Gospel it is not lawful to divorce upon all occasions; and if He will not for these deny her to be His Spouse, much lesse should we deny her to be our Mother. May not one, who is convinced in his judgment, that Monarchy is the best of Governments, live happily in Venice or Holland? And that Travailer were absurd, who would rather squabble with these amongst whom he sojourns, then observe these rites and solemnities which are required by the Laws of the places where he lives? What is once statuted by a Law, we all consent to, in choosing Commissioners to represent us in these Parliaments where the Laws are made; and so if they ordain us to be decimated, or to leave the Nation if we conform not, we cannot say, when that Law is put to execution, that we are oppress'd; no more then we could complain, if one did remove us legally from these Lands

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which he purchased from our Trustee, whom we had impowred to sell it.

As David said to Saul, 1 Sam. 26. 20. *Why went the King out to catch a flea? So may I say to our great Divines, Why contravert they about shadows? Is it fit that Christians, who finde it too great a task to govern their private souls, should be so much concerned how the Church is governed by others? Wherefore, seeing many have been saved who were most inexpert in these questions, and that foolish zeal, passion, and too much curiositie therein, hath damned many, I may conclude, that to pry into these, is neither necessary, because of the first, nor expedient, because of the last.*

Since discretion opened my eyes, I have alwayes judg'd it necessary for a Christian, to look oftner to his Practice of Piety, then to his Confession of Faith; and to fear more the crookedness of his will, then the blindnesse of his judgment; delighting more to walke on from grace to grace, working out the work of his own salvation with fear and trembling, then to stand still with the Galileans curiously gazing up to heaven. True Religion and undefiled is to visit the widow and the fatherlesse; and the dis-

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say drawn up against the damned spirits shall be, That when our Saviours poor ones were hungry, they did not feed them; when they were naked, they did not cloath them, without mentioning any thing of their unbelief in matters of Controversie or Government. And therefore I hope, that these to whom I address myself in this discourse, will rather believe me to be their friend, because of their piety, then their enemy, because of their errors.

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THE

My dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the proposed amendment to the Constitution of the State, and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith

THE



THE
VIRTUOSO
OR,
STOICK.

CHAP. I.
Of Atheism.



Albeit Man be but a Statue
of dust kneaded with tears,
moved by the hid engines
of his restless passions ; a
clod of earth , which the
shortest Fever can burn to
ashes, and the least showre of rheums wash
away to nothing : Yet makes he as much
noise in the world, as if both the Globes
(those glorious Twins) had been un-
womb'd from that formless Chaos, by
the Midwifry of his Wit : he speaks

thunder, looks lightnings, breathes storms;
and by the eloquence of his own Vanity,
perswades himself that his commands are
able to unhinge the Poles. From which
boundless pride, I confidently conclude,
that if a natural instinct, or, as the Stoicks
term it, *πρὸς τὴν φύσιν*, had not irresistibly
bowed his faith to assent to a Deity, he
had never, neither upon designe, nor in
compliance to Custom (as Atheists al-
ledge) suffer'd to creep into his Creed,
That there was one greater then himself,
who could rein his affections, and bound
their effects, according to the dictates of
his irresistible will.

And albeit Regiments of Arguments,
levy'd both from the stately Fabrick of
heavens arched Pend, and from the in-
imitable Embroidery of earths flowery
Bowl, be requisite for conquering the in-
fidelity of others, and for rendering them
tributaries to that all-forming Essence:
Yet, doth my faith render up the arms
of its depraved Reason, and turn Prose-
lyte to this divine truth, upon the sole sight
of one of these dying Atheists; who,
upon any surprisall, do with amazement
throw up their eyes to heaven, as if they
sent

sent their looks in ambassage to beg assistance from thence; and cry *God save me*, as if these beastly souls, when attaqued unexpectedly, knew whence their health were to be expected: Like to other sick brutes, who when assaulted by sickness, are, by the hand of that same storge and instinct, led to some herb or flower, which is an Apothecaries shop appointed by nature for them.

Neither think I these arguments which are twisted together of three propositions so strong as these instincts are; where truth, like the Sun, seems to dart home its light in one unperceivable act, whereas in these, pur-blind nature may be mistaken, not onely judging of the truth of either of the three parts, but likewise of their connexion and alliance. I know that that miscreant, who began his Hell upon Earth, by being burnt at *Tholouse* for theorick Atheisme, did upon his first approach to the Fire, cry, *O God*: Whereupon, being taxt by the assisting Jesuit, answered, that these and such like expressions were the offsprings of custome: But poor soul he might have considered, that seeing he had crept from his cradle into that error, and

had run his glass to its last sand, in propagating that hellish conceit: that therefore this expression was rather a confession than an escape, rather a product of a rational soul, than of depraved custome; for as it was in it self a divine truth, so it was in him contrary to a settled habit.

There is another Caball of Atheists, who think that this Beleeif was at first but the quaint *Leger-de-main* of some strongly-pated States-man; who to over-awe the capriciousness of a giddy multitude, did forge this opinion of a rewarder of all humane actions: And to enforce this, do instance *Numa Pompilius*, and *Mahomet*, whose palpable cheats grew up in their successors into religions; and whose inventions were received with as much bigotry, by the wisest of men, as is that Deity which is now the object of our adorations. Wherefore (say they) seeing the rational soul hath failed so oft, and so absurdly in its discoveries, how, or why should we submit our selves slavishly to its determinations? For that which doth at some times erre, can never at any time be concluded infallible.

To

To these I answer, that albeit, as to the particular way of worship, the world is oft-times deluded: And albeit, even as to their apprehensions of this incomprehensible Essence, multitudes be sometimes misled; Yet, these staggering Fancies fix this great truth, *that there is a supreme who must be adored*: For if this innate Instinct did not coopere with these impostures, in gaining an assent to their fictitious Religions and Hierarchies, it were impossible for any humane authority to establish Principles so remote from reason, and to subjugate by these even the mildest tempers. But I take the root from which these errors do spring, to be, that the twilight of darkned reason glimpring to man that *impressa* of the divine Image, which though much decayed, yet rests still upon his soul; and not being able, because of the faintness of his light, and the decay of that divine *Impressa*, to discern exactly what that Deity is, with whose image it is signeted; believes implicitly with a profound respect, any who hath the confidence to obtrude any knowledge of it upon them: Concluding in the conclave of their own thoughts, that

that none durst contemn so far that omnipotent Thunder-darter, as to vend their own fancies for sacred Oracles. And albeit these hood-wrinked Nations did erect a *walsh* in their own hearts wherein all these Vice-gods were worshipped; Yet were all these but representations of the true God: for His Omnipotency and Power was adored in their *Mars*; his omniscience in their *Apollo*, &c. And it is very probable that the Heathens admired so each attribute of God Almighty, that they thought each deserved distinct Altars; so that their errors had their rise from rather too much, then too little respect; and that as the same Ocean receives several names from the several shoars it washes, so, according to the several operations of the most High, did these deluded Pagans establish several Deities. But that all these did ultimately terminate in one, is clear from the Inscription of that Athenian Altar *To the unknown God*; from the designation of *εὐαγγελιστῆς*, from their common Feasts, or *δωδεκα*; from the adjunct of *Delphicus* given to *Apollo*, which in Greek signifies

signifies *unus*, as *Macrobius* observes; from their Altars erected, *Diisque Deabusque omnibus*; from the general invocation of all the Deities joyntly, subjoynd to all their particular sacrifices. So that the great and all-comprehending *Idea*, wherein he is represented as in one big mirror to us, was by them broke in pieces, and in each of these pieces taken alone did they see a Deity, though much abridged; Whereas all these pieces, when set together, did represent but one, and each piece did then shew but a part. But to evidence that our belief of a Deity is not a State and traditional imposture, I would willingly know if ever the skilfullest of Sathans emissaries were able to induce the world to believe that there was no God; which (doubtless) might have at some occasions contributed much to some mens Politick designs, and which that rebel would have attempted, if either God had not restrained him, or himself had not known it imprestable. And it is most remarkable, that the first promoters of that divine Doctrine were persons, who, both by precept and practice, decryed
Ambition

Ambition and declined State-employments ; and to it were absurd to think that they invented these in subordination to State-Projects.

There is also much force in that Argument, wherein from the nature of prophesying, is concluded the *being* of a God: for, to foresee, is doubtless a way of seeing, far above the reach of humane nature ; man not being able to conclude but that, What is possible upon both parts, may come to pass upon either of its parts. And hence it was, that the Heathens themselves termed this prediction *divination*, as if it could not be but divine. As also, if there were not a God, but that this were a fiction, it would follow, that error and delusion (such as this *ex hypothesis*) were able, and actually did, of all other things, frame a man's soul most to virtue ; and that the best of men (such as the adorers of a Deity) were both the greatest cheats and block-heads. All which, are absurdities to be hiss'd at by all who are masters of the meanest portion of humane reason.

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There lurketh much curious contemplation in pondering, how that albeit the parents of all heathenish Religions, have been incomparably the chiefest Wits in their times; for else they could not have impress'd the spirits of their disciples with such abstract principles: Yet all their Models seem repugnant to common Reason; and they have choic'd to teach principles which seem ridiculous.

Thus the Fictions related by the Poets of their Gods, the Rites used by the *Romans*, and the Fopperies of the *Alcorans*, are absurdities unworthy of a rational belief, if man were not acted by an innate principle, to place the mysteries of Religion above his Reason.

By which we see, that the imputation cast upon the Scriptures of their contrary to Reason, chocks likewise the principles of all Nations: and certainly, if there were nothing revealed to us in Religion, but what the short line of our Reason might fathom, the omnipotency of God, and the weakness of our own Reason, should remain still unknown: and seeing our Reason is onely suitable to our Nature, certainly if that infinite Essence
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and its mysteries might be comprehended by that same reason, which measureth things infinite, we might conclude God to be infinite likewise : and is it not impudence in us, who know not the ebbing and flowing of the Sea, nor the reason why the Adamant draweth the Iron, to repine because we cannot comprehend the Essence of God Almighty ? and then vainly to conclude, that because we cannot grasp within the short arms of our understanding, the vast bulk of the Deity, that there is no Deity ? A conclusion as absurd, as if one should say, that when the nimble wings of an Arrow transport it above our sight, it did leave off to be, when it left off to be perceived. And I am of opinion, that mysteriousness suits rarely well with divine Truths, the finest things using always to be best wrapt up : thus if we listen to our hid inclinations, we will finde a pleasing veneration in reserved silence ; and our curiosity will swiftly follow, what by its retiredness fleeth from us : silent groves whose bush-top trees lay their heads together, as in a conspiracie to resist the Sun's entry, and powder its light with Sables, create

create a veneration in us. And as the Heathens did choose groves, so did the primitive Christians light their Devotions with Torches and Candles; intimating thereby, that umbrag'd silence was an excellent Shrine for sincere devotions: and in this sense, it may be, the Word of God is said to be a Lantern to our steps, and the seven Churches are compared to seven Candlesticks. Did not our Saviour teach His disciples in Parables? and was not the Ark veiled from the eyes of the people? The Pagans dispensed their divinity in Hieroglyphicks; and amongst humane Writers, the most mysterious carry still the Lawrels: And why should we vainly wish to comprehend the nature of the Deity, seeing *Moses*, Gods intimate and minion, could not have that allowance? And God himself, when for our necessary instruction He would discover something of Himself to us, is forced *per dyptosis*, (as Divines speak) to discover Himself in a stile borrowed from humane frailty, and to express His infinite affections by our disordered passions.

I believe, that *Socrates*, Nature's greatest disciple, and the Deity's *proto-martyr*, was a profelyte of the same faith, which we profess, and had his large soul illuminated by that Sun of righteousness, whose resplendent rays are now the bright Torches of the Christian Church. Neither is my belief in this staggered by the silence of his co-temporary Writers, as to this particular: seeing these, nor being of the same perswasion with him, but being convinced of his moral worth, did describe his opinions suitably to their own apprehension. Thus did these Pagan Historians admire the great Saviour of mankind, onely for his moral accomplishments, without reaching these divine principles, by which He was acted. The *Stoicks* likewise were, in all probability, a Tribe of *John Baptists*; and God having resolved to purge the Universe of its original unrighteousness by that blessed Manna which came down from heaven to give life to the world, did by their doctrine of abstemiousness, as by a spare diet, prepare its body for receiving that divine Dose. And certainly, if men had disbanded that execrable troop of
lusts,

lusts, against which these preached, and had listned (as the *Stoicks* book of Discipline enjoyned) to their own private consciences, and had by retiredness abstracted themselves from the reach of temptations, it had facilitated much their conversion: for if the young Lawyer, who came to consult Christ how to draw up his Security of heaven, and of his portion there, had believed their Oracle, which decry'd riches as the unnecessary baggage of man's life, and the mud which clog'd the wings of the souls contemplation, and kept it from soaring its natural pitch; he had never refused our Saviour's yoke, because, he was commanded to sell all, and to give it to the poor. Thus, likewise if the rich glutton had dyeted himself according to the scant prescript of their allowance, his scorched tongue had not stood in need of a drop of water to allay its thirst. Neither had *Nicodemus* needed to have mantled himself in the darkness of the night, when he came to our Saviour, out of fear lest he should have been discovered; seeing their doctrine might have taught him, that fear was a passion unworthy to be lodg'd

lodgeth in the soul of man: And that there is nothing here, which a man either should, or needeth to fear.

But albeit neither *instinct* nor *faith*, were able to convince us infallibly of this truth; Yet it is both more satisfying, and more safe to embrace this opinion, than its contrary. More satisfying, because mans *summum bonum* here, being lodged in the tranquillity of his spirit; That which can best plain and smooth the rugged and uneven face of his frequent and inevitable misfortunes, must be doubtless the most carefull of opinions: wherefore, seeing nothing can strengthen so much mans frailty, nothing check so soon his despair, nothing feed so much his hope, nor animate so much his courage, as to believe that there is a God, who beareth the heaviest end of all our crosses upon the shoulders of His love; who is able to turn, or arrest the gliddy wheel of fortune by the strong hand of His Omnipotency; and who twisteth Lawrels of unimaginable joys for the heads of them who fight under his banners: If a man leaned not his weary soul upon this divine Rest, he were not only an enemy to
nature,

Nature, but even to his own happiness. What rocks of danger could men escape, if blinde Fortune did sit at the helm, and if vertuous persons complain, as affairs are presently stated, that their merits are not weighed with indifferencie enough in the scales of Justice? What might be expected, if Hazard got the balance to manage? and these who leave their native countries, when they perceive that the Law beginneth to render its Oracles in an uncertain Scale, and with a trembling voice, behooved to leave the world: if this Anarchy were by Atheism established? For as a wise Stoick well observed, *as is this in us, even so is it in the world, It were impossible to live in a world void of God, and void of providence.*

It is likewise most safe: for if there be a Deiry, doubtless these obdured Atheists, whose obstinacie hath conjured their consciences to a constrain'd silence, and bribed these infallible Witnesses, to depone what suited best with their wilde resolutions, rather neglected resolutely their sincere depositions; then certainly the just flames of that Gods indigna-

tion, whom they have disclaimed, will heat for them a furnace in hell, beyond what the other damned spirits shall meet with in their torture: Whereas albeit there be no tribunal, from which such a thunder-bolt sentence may be darted, nor no supreme Judge by whom our actions shall be canvas'd; Then these who have paid their adorations at his altars, shall be in no danger. Wherefore, seeing it should be the task of a *Virtnoso*, to turn out all such thoughts as may raise a mutiny in his breast; it were a foolish toy in him to entertain Atheisme, which is a Nurcery of disquietness: for whose breast could enjoy a calme, whilst a concernment of so much weight as his eternal portion, did hing from the weak thred of a mere *may be*, and of such a *may be* as marches so near with a *will not be*?

But if ye would know, what disquieting vapours Atheisme sends up to the brain, when it is once drunk in; go to the horroir-creating beds of a dying Atheist, whose roaring voice might awake the most lethargick conscience that ever the devill had asleep: There ye shall know

know by the Urinal of his eyes, and the water standing therein, what convulsion-fits his soul suffers; and shall learn from his own mouth, how grievously his diseased soul is stretched upon the rack of despair: then it is that the voluminous Registers of his conscience, which did lie formerly clasp'd in some unsearcht corner of his memory, are laid open before him, and the devil who hitherto gave him the lessening end of the Prospect, to survey his sins in, turns now its magnifying end to this fearful eye. It should be then the grand designe of a Philosopher, to order his own brest aright, before he go abroad to view the Works of the Creation; lest if he leave its door unbolted, the devil steal from him his richest Jewel, whilest he sweats to enrich his contemplation with what is of far less consequence.

CHAP. II.

Of Superstition.

IT is not wild fancy to think, that *Atheism* hath been the product of *Superstition*: for certainly, many who were by humour *Gallies*, finding that Religion exacted from men such inhumane homage to its recognizance, as was the sacrificing children among the Heathens, wearying Pilgrimages and heetick Lents amongst Christians, did resolve rather to deny than to adore such Deities. Thus *Lucretius* revolted upon *Agamemnon's* sacrificing his daughter *Iphigenia* for the Grecian safety, crying out,

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.

And thus *Petronius Arbitr* a monk of the same Cell, says that,

Primum in orbe deos fecit timor.

— *Fulmina caelo*

Cum caderent — — —

And to prevent this, our Saviour doth oft inculcate, that his yoke is easie and His burden is light. And doubtless, as the straightest

Straightest line is always the shortest: So the most rational designs are alwayes easiely effected: and as Seneca hath excellently observed, *Lece Deum non effert tamet non peccarem ob peccati vilisiam*. There is something of meanness in the gallantest, and most alluring sin. And this is most energetically exprest in Scripture, whilst it is said that the wicked *reay themselves by their sins*. A principle which not onely the magistrall Authority of Gods Spirit, but our experience likewise places above the reach of all scruples: for are not the iniquities, the cheats, and palliated parricides, and sacrileges brooded by ambition, the churlishness and close-ha dedness parented by avarice, effects unworthy to be father'd upon any rational soul: and at which we should scarlet our cheeks with blushes, as well as enshame them through fear, and should stand as much in awe of our consciences, as most do of a Deity? Yet, it may be we are in a mistake, whilst we place Superstition in the excess of such adorations, as are either commanded, or indifferent: for seeing the object of our adoration,

God Almighty, is in Himself infinite, we can never exceed either in our respects to Him, or in the expressions of them. Excess being onely admissible, where the object is finite, and where we attribute more then is due, which can never be here. Thus if Kneeling be lawful at any occasion, I hardly see why it is not lawful to kneel at all occasions. And if these exterior rites and ceremonies (some whereof are allow'd in all Churches) be judged requisite, for expressing our vassalage and subordination to God our maker, either they are altogether unwarrantable, or else we should proportion them (as far as in us lyes) to that infinite object. And seeing the Angels are said to cover their faces with their wings before Him, the Patriarches to fall upon their faces and worship; and our adorable Saviour in that conflict wherein He represented sinfull man, is by *Matthew* remarked to have fallen upon his face, by *Mark* to have fallen upon the ground, and by *Luke* to have kneeled: What is crawling man, that he should account such gestures fond Superstition? It would appear then, that superstition consists in mans worshipping

Shipping God by means unlawfull, such as are children-sacrifices, and such like, whereby His divine attributes are mis-represented, and tainted with cruelty, or tyranny; and not in an excess, in such expressions of our respect as are in themselves lawfull. And if there be any strength in that argument wherein we inforce the being of God, from the harmonious consent and assent of all Nations: certainly, by that same argument, we may establish the decency, if not the necessity, of Ceremonies. For, what Nation bows to Altars, without profound and external submissions? And, who lodges upon the surface of our Globe, who payes not as the *reddendo* of their Charter to these gods whom they worship, ceremonial Adorations, wrapt up in most submissive Rites?

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Worlds Creation.

THAT God made all things for His glory, is an expression, which (I think) looks not well at the test of reason, and seems to have no warrant but unwary custom: for beyond all question, His glory was so brim-full formerly, that it neither needed, nor could receive any considerable accession from this small drop. And besides this, the innate apprehension we have of doing any thing for ones glory, dyes this expression with some guilt: Yet, I confess, we may warrantably say, that when perverse man calls His power in question, or controverts His being *only wise*; that then, God for our instruction, and the vindication of His own glorious Attributes, doth many things for His own glory. And in this sense, the Scripture saith, that God will punish the wicked, and deliver His people, for His own glory. And wherever it is

said,

said, that God doth, or createth any thing for His own glory, it is doubtless in this sense; in which man (who is made after His image) may act for his own glory without any vanity; albeit to act for his own glory in the first sense were in him criminal. It is then more probable, that God being infinitely good, and all good being *sui communicativum*, that His designe in creating the world, was to communicate and display His goodness: and upon this base probably hath Aristotle reared up his error, of the world's *existence from all eternity*; for, seeing God was *ab aeterno* infinitely good, and that good is still communicative; he did (it may be) conclude, that *ab aeterno*, God did communicate His goodness: which could only be to creatures. And therefore it was necessary that there should have been a world: and some Philosophers have aver'd, that the world flowed from God *per emanationem*, *ab aeterno*, as beams are lanced out from the body of the Sun. Albeit I be none of Aristotle's Partisans, nor hold my Philosophy of him as my Superiour; Yet I cannot but think, that God hath

hath communicated His goodness to worlds prior to ours, which seems but a conceit of 5662 years standing. But I am not so arrogant as to determine the time of the first worlds birth, nor how many Cadets it hath had; resolving to leave its Date, blank, to be fill'd up by some arrogant Pretender. Neither should I accuse mine own thoughts of Heresie, for concluding, that probably there are presently thousands of worlds co-existing with ours, whereof some, it may be, are governed by Maximes, if not contrary, yet at least different from these which are our Canons. All which worlds, albeit they were actually subsisting, would lie in the bosome of the large imaginarie Spaces, but like so many small balls in the corner of a large Tennis-court. I shall not for confirming this opinion, cite, with an ignorant French Curate, the parable of the Lepets, where it is said, *Nonne sunt decem mundi?* because I know that it was wittily answered, *Sed ubi sunt reliqui novem?*

CHAP.

CHAP. IV

Of Eternity.

THat Eternity is all present, and that
 in it, there is neither preterit, nor
 future, is but a conceit, and a needless
 myserie imposed upon our belief, which
 is really more mysterions then the Tri-
 nity; who knows but it is founded upon
 an expression in Cicero, wherein Eterni-
 ty is call'd *eternum instans*? For how then
 can it be said, that God was before the
 world? for *was* is preterit, and before
 the world there was, as themselves alledg,
 no time; and so there was a *was* in eter-
 nity. Is not God call'd by Himself Alpha
 and Omega, first and last, the one where-
 of is preterit, and the other future?
 And it is said, Rev. 16. 5, *O glorious God,
 Thou art, and wast, and shalt be.* And
 if it be answered, That this is only fit-
 ted to our capacities; certainly, that
 is all is craved; for doubtlesse there is
 no such reall thing, as these three mea-
 sures of time, even in things finit and crea-
 red;

red; for they owe their being only to our
 conceit, as well in the one as in the other.
 And when God. Describ'd Himself by
 His name *J A H I am*, it was not mean't,
 that no measure of time could be attri-
 buted to Him, but the present; but ra-
 ther, that what He was, was so manifestly com-
 prehensible; and that all we could know
 of Him, was that He existed: and by
 that expression, that all things in Him
 are present, was meant; that by His
 Knowledge *intuitive*, (as Divines term
 it) He comprehends all things, which
 were to be, as if they were really pre-
 sent; and this is spoke, not of his being,
 but of his knowledge. Neither can it be
 concluded that if *was* or *shall be*, may
 be attributed to God, then He must be
 mutable, and that *was*, denotes mutation;
 for as I said formerly, these are but
 terms, not really existing, and so cannot
 impose any real mutation.

CHAR.

CHAP. V.

Of Providence.

HOW God employs his uncontrollable Scepter, after what fashion He governs this lower world, and in what characters He writes His eternal Decrees, hath been the arrogant studie of some mad-cap Pedants, who talk as magisterially of His Decrees, as if they were of His Cabinet-Council. And altho' to deter such bold intenders, He destroyed thousands of his ancient people, because they looked into His Ark; Yet, such is the petulance of some later Wits, that they must needs look into His unsearchable bosom, and there Marshall all His Decrees, and conceive they understand His way of working; and thus in disposing of objects, Infinitely removed by their abstruseness from their sense, they shew themselves more ridiculous, than those who would dispute concerning the qualities of an object, before it came so near as that they may know of what species,

species it is : for seeing it is a maxime, that there is nothing in our understanding, which hath not past to it thorow our senses, and that the things of God are immaterial, and so fall not under the cognizance of our senses ; It must be folly to think, that any humane scrutinie can finde out mysteries that are so unsearchable, except they be imparted to them by immediate revelation ; a kinde of correspondence which I conceive few now a dayes hold with heaven. Yet, I confesse, it is as hard to confute their fictions, as it is impossible for them to come by the knowledge of them. But as this study is unattainable ; so it is unprofitable ; for seeing God's art of governing the world, and His Decrees of saving or damning its Citizens, is a trade we shall never be able to practise : why would we have such an itch to understand it ? It should be enough to us to be saved ; albeit we know not how, or by what manner of Decrees ; except we be of the same mettall with that foolish patient, who would not be cured, because the Physician would not shew him how the cure was to be composed, and what were its ingredients.

And

And is it not the Zenith and top branch of madness for us to pry into Gods unsearchable Decrees, who know not how our neighbours calf is formed in its Dams belly?

It was a narrow Omnipotency, which some mean-spirited Heathens allowed their *Jupiter*, when they conceived that he wanted leisure to dispose of trifles.

Non licet exiguis rebus adesse Jovi.

For if the twinkling of an eye, were not time sufficient for God to dispose upon all the affairs of this world, then there might be a greater power than His; and the power to dispose so sundainly, were wanting to his omnipotency, and so He were not infinite, and consequently no God.

Neither was the Rodomonade of *Alphonso*, King of *Portugal*, more pious than this. When he alledged that if God had made use of His advice in framing the world, He had helped many things in it, which he now could justly tax, of error.

These two extremes, are the two Poles, whereon the globe of Atheisme turns it self; some, out of an impious humility, complementing God out of His Authority, by denying that He disposes of the meaner size of business; and others detracting from his providence, in attributing his operations, to chance and fate, or branding them with injustice or imprudence.

There are among School-men two opinions which dispute victory with (almost) equal forces. The one whereof, will have God the sole agent, and to make use of secondary causes, only, as of ciphers; these say that it is not fire which burns, but that God burns *ad presentiam ignis*; nor water which cools, but that God cools *ad presentiam aquæ*: which is in my opinion, the same thing as to say, that God juggeth with man; and as Char-mers do, presented ingredients, but wrought by hid means.

In too near an affinity with this, is the Doctrine of Predestination as some teach it, wherein they will have man to play the mere spectator in his own Salvation.

and albeic there be a free and full tender of mercy made to lost man, yet will not allow him any power to embrace or reject it; judging this one of the necessary appanages of Gods Omnipotency, that he doth save or condemn *ex mera beneplacito*, never considering, that the question is not, what God can do, but what he doth: And that it derogates nothing from his Omnipotency, that he will not damn poor sinners who according to their Doctrine cannot be blamed for their obstinacy; because it was never free to them to do otherwise: and how (I pray you) could the sluggard in the parable, have been punished, for not improving his talent, and laying it up in a napkin, if God have by His Decree cast an insolvable knot upon that napkin, wherein it was laid up?

The other opinion, will have secondary causes the sole agents; and teaches, that God in the first moulding of each creature, did dote it with innate qualities, sufficient to act every thing requisite for its subsistence; but in signe of its subjection to its Maker, reserved to Himself, as His prerogative royal, a

power to bend and bow these inclinations upon extraordinary occasions, for the good of the Universe, or when his infallible Omni-prudence should think expedient. Thus, when that All-seeing eye of the world, the Sun, was first turned off the frame, it had in Commission to sow its influences over the world without any retardment; Yet was its motion arrested, and turned back by an extraordinary warrant in the dayes of *Joshua* and *Zadachiah*. Thus they make the creatures resemble a Watch, which after it is once compleated, goes by its own Springs and Wheels, without the Artists extraordinary assistance. Yet when either its motion becomes irregular, or when the owner finds it fit, it is unpieced, or hath its Index put forward or backward at his pleasure. And this last, seems to suit best with the principles, both of Christianity and Stoicisme. With Christianity, because it gives a check to presumption, and suffers not man to think himself the sole arbiter of his own condition; because God can easily quash these Ba-
bylon

bylon-like fancies, which his toplest ambition is still a building; and to his despair, because a lift from the strong arme of Providence, may heave him up above all his difficulties.

This corresponds best likewayes with Stoicisme, because it pulls the hands of a sluggard from his bosome, and sets them awork to prepare for himself, and not to repose his unreasonable hopes upon divine Providence; which only keeps those from sinking, who endeavour to swimme. This likewayes takes from man, all excuse of sinning, not suffering him to lay over his viciousness upon providence, a shift too ordinary mongst such as misunderstand the rashless Doctrine of the reformed Church.

This opinion makes us likewayes understand, what the Heathens meant by *fortune*, which they termed *giddy*; what the Stoicks meant by *fate*, which they confessed to be *irresistible*; and in what sence Philosophers concluded that each man could hammer out his own fortune. As to the Pagans *fortune*, it cannot be thought, that seeing it was by themselves confess'd to be *blind*, that they could

trust it with the reins of the admirably managed world. And seeing they confessed, that it was alwayes staggering and unconstant, it cannot be thought that they could ascribe to it, all these curious and just events, which they themselves admired hourly. Wherefore it is probable, that the Philosophers, having through the prospect of nature, and by an uninterrupted experience, observed, that man (who acted from a freedom of spirit unrestrained, either by providence or starr-influences as to his ordinary operations) was of a volatile and capricious humor; therefore they concluded, that the state of humane affairs, which was framed and unframed at his ill-fist pleasure, behoyed necessarily to be most subject to changes, And that seeing the victories of *Caesar*, depended upon the inclinations of his souldiers, who by abandoning him, would fetch his prosperity away with them, they had reason therefore to terme his fortune Frail and exposed to hazard.

Thus the advancement of the restless Courtier is uncertain, because it hangs from

from the humor of his Prince, whose spirit hath some allay of unconstancy, as well as hath that of the fearful subject, who trembles under his Scepter. And thus the oyl consuming student, can promise himself no applause, because the paralytick hand of the multitudes fancies, holds the scales wherein his abilities are weighed.

In fine, *fortune* was nothing to these Ancients, but the unbodied freedome of mans will, considered abstractly from all particular persons and the innate qualities of all other creatures (which, because they are mortal, must therefore be changable) then which nothing is more inconstant, nothing more blind.

The other branch of divine Providence, which consists in the supreme Authority, whereby God makes all humane inclinations, run sometimes against the byasse of their specifick nature, was by them termed *fate*. And this in their Muthology they fabled to be an Adamant chain, which they fastned to the foot of *Jupiters* Chair, meaning by its adamantine nature, that it

was

was hard to be broke like the Adamant; and by fastning it to *Jupiters* Chair, that it was the product of the Almighty's power. Thus *Fortune* and *Fate*, were to them but the right and left hand of Christian providence.

These embodied Angels, the *Stoicks*, finding that fortunes megrim could not be cured, nor fates decrees rescinded, and yet resolving, in spite of all external accidents, to secure to themselves a calmness of spirit; did place their happiness in the contempt of all these follies, whose blossomes fortune could not blast, and sought for happiness in an acquiescence to all which providence did unalterably decree; So that neither fortune nor fate could stand in the way of their happiness, because they slighted the one, and submitted to the other.

And in this sense, each man in their schools, was admitted to be Master-of-work to his own fortune: and that without disparaging the omnipotent power of the great Fortune-maker, in submission to whom their happiness was placed;

Albeit

Albeit the knowledge and acknowledgement of a God, be the *basis* of true Stoicisme, and a firmer one then any the Heathens could pretend to; Yet that knowledge of Him, which by the curiosity of School-men and the bigotry of Tub-preachers, as now formed in a Body of Divinity, is of all others the least necessary and the most dangerous. And whereas we did see God but in a Glas formerly, that Glas is now so misted and soyld by each Pedants flegmatick breath, that it is hard to see him at all, but impossible to see Him there. And to extend a little that mysterious analogy; we are said to behold God here, as in a Glas; and as objects are best perceived in the smoothest mirrors; so the plainest descriptions of Him, are still the truest: for when he is seen by Atheists in the globe-glas of ther infidelity, He appears less then really He is; when behold by the Pagans in the multiplying Glas of Paganisme, He appears many; and when He is lookt upon in the magnifying Glas of Superstition, though He appear but one, Yet He is misrepresented, because He is represented

as more terrible then he desires to appear
and ordinarily the better cut Glasses are,
and the more artificial, the worse the face
as by them represented.

CHAP. VI.

Of Theory.

THat first course which did sow all the
world with briars and thorns, did
of all other things, fall most heavily upon
the soul of man. Which because it
was chief in the transgression, ought
in reason to have been most tortured in
the punishment. And now his disquieted
spirit is daily pierc'd with the prickles of
thorny disputes and debates; which, as
like briars, they produce no fruit fit for
alimenting that noble half of man, which
is his rational soul; So do they, like
thorns pierce his tender conscience,
and to screw his torments to their high-
est pin; the thoughts of God, and of
settlement in Him, which like balme
should cure these sores, is become that
hemlock,

hemlock, which occasions his distractions, and poysons his meditations. For, albeit the Heroes of the Primitive Church, did give milk in abundance to Infant-christians; Yet, many of their successors, have mixt it so with the tart vinegar of contention, that the milk begins now to cruddle, and so is become loathsome to the appetite of tender believers. For, most of Church-men, being idle, and conceiving, that if they taught onely the holy Scriptures, their vocation might by Laicks be undervalued as easie, and that they would be denyed that applause, which was due to quaintnesse of wit, especially in a settled Church, wherein Church-men could not draw reverence from the people, by Oracles, as did the Heathen Priests; nor by prophecies and miracles, as did the Servants of the most High, under the old and new Testaments; did therefore, according to their private inclinations, frame each to himself a new kind of Divinity. The more pragmatick sort, and these whose humour was edged with choler, invented polemicke or controverted divinity; And so by an intestine and civil war of opinions,

opinions, raised within the bowels of Religion, did waste and pillage that holy Canaan, which formerly flowed with the milk of sincere Doctrine, and the honey of divine Consolations. And then that precious blood, which formerly purpled only pagan-scaffolds, dyed now the swords of fellow-believers: who, to propagate their private judgement, buried Churches under their rubbish, fed the birds of heaven with the Carcasses of pious and reverend Church-men: and by the mad hands of bigot opiniastry, broke to pieces all the sacred bonds of naturall and civil duties; and thus they raised the devil of contention, whom they could not lay again, and made this Itch of disputing, turn the Scab of the Church.

Others again, in whose brains sullen melancholy form'd phantomes and ideas, invented scholastick Theology; and these in abstract cells, erected a Mint-house, for coyning the dross of their own contemplations, into wonderful bombast notions; and to make them go current, in the suffering Church, gave them the *impress* of Theology.

A third sort, not able to soare their pitch in the sky of Invention, resolved to set up a correspondence with heaven: and this they called enthusiastick, or inspired Theology. And their Cabbins were Post-houses, where one might know what was resolved lately in the Conclave of heaven, whether the King or Parliament was to wear the Lawrels, and what should be the issue of our pious rebellions. These could likewise cast the horoscope of our salvation; and invented a species of Physiognomy, whereby they could tell if the marks of Grace dwelt upon a face, and if one had the traits of an elect Child of God. After this fashion did they prophesie their own fancies, and call that *Providence* only which made for them.

There wants not some likewayes, who, out of a well meaning desire, to make the lamp of truth dart its rayes with the clearer splendor, snuff it so nearly, that they extinguish it quite: and leave us nothing but the stink of its snuff; like some curious Physicians, who purge so frequently, that they destroy the body entrusted to their cure. We in this Island

stand have met with some of these *Chateaus*, who, I am confident, purged offener both Church and State; then *Luke*, the beloved Physician, would have prescribed, if we had had the good fortune to have been his patients.

The tallest wit is not able to reach heaven, albeit (I know) many disjoin their wits in stretching them too high in the inquiry of its mysteries. Neither impute I our short-coming in the knowledge of these mysteries, folly to their obtruseness; but, I believe our meditations are more clouded in relation to these, then really they need to be, because of their innate frailty: for we see, that some who are masters of much reason in things humane, betray much folly in their devotions; wherefore, I am induced to believe, that it fares with the soul in this, as usually it doth with the body, whose pulls are proportionally the weaker, as the thing grasp'd-after is plac'd above its true reach. And so these arrogant Pretenders pull but faintly, because they raise their meditations too high on their tip-toes: whereby they are disabled from employing all
their

their natural vigour, in pulling at these weighty and sublime Truths, which they catch, not by that corner which is nearest, as meaner wits do, (and so are more successfull) but endeavour a fetch at what Divinity is highest; by which effort, their endeavours are fainter then these whose spirit is of a lesser size. And these Colossus wits, become the greatest Hereticks, as those ordinarily are most burnt, whose fingers oft stir up fires, and as Chirurgians have more cuts and wounds, then any other Mechanicks, who handle not so oft these wounding tools. It is not fit that mortal man should wrestle too much with these mysteries, least his reason, like *Jacob*, be forc'd to come off, halting.

Nothing hath more busied my thoughts then to find a reason why the Heathens, who were as assiduous and zealous too in the worship of their Gods, as we Christians, did never frequent Sermons, nor knew no such such part of divine Service; whereof (probably) the reason was because their Governours (whose commands amongst them were the sole *super-divineship* of all Ecclesiastick Rites) feared

feared, that Church-men, if they had been licenc'd to harangue to the people, would have influenc'd too much that gross body: which was the reason likewise, why in the primitive Church (as one of their Historians observes) *ex formula populo predicabant, tantum antiquitas timebat dissensum*. They preached only approved Sermons, so much did antiquity fear these leaders of the people; a practice, as is reported, lately renewed by the Duke of Russia: and this seemeth also to have been the reason, why all Liturgies have prick't texts for their Preachers, lest if they had been left a freedome in their choice, they had chose such as might, in the letter, have suited best with such seditious Libels as are now obtruded upon the people, in lieu of pious homilies, at remarkable or festival occasions. Yet, I think, that our late Doctours, who can find all Doctrine in any text, would easily have eluded that canonick designe. If we should parallel the Homilies, which these renowned Fathers have left as Legacies to posterity, with these which our age runs after, we would find, that
the

the first were pointed lessons of mortification; which, like *Moses* rod, could draw gushes of tears from the rocky hearts of the most obdured finners: whereas many of these last are but State-gazets wherein the people are informed, what are the resolves of the civil Magistrate: And whereas their first institution made them Ambassadors of glad-tydings betwixt God and his people, they have made themselves Heraulds to denounce warres betwixt God's Vice-gerent and His subjects. Thus, *Peter's* successors will oft times, like himself, rather draw the sword then watch for their Master. And since our Saviour hath disarmed them, as He did *Peter*, and filled their hands with the keyes, these who offend them, are sure to get over the head with these. I confesse, God hath not left His Church without some skilfull Pilots, to lead in His servants, with security, to the harbour of Salvation: to whom this Discourse and its Authour shall pay all respects.

CHAP. VII.

Of the strictness of Churches.

Most of all Churches, do like coy maids, lace their bodies so strait, that they bring on them a consumption; and will have the gates of heaven to have been only made for themselves: and as this nigardlinesse hath possesse Churches, from that root hath stem'd the churlishness of some private Christians, who will allow God but a most inconsiderable number of these whom He hath admitted to make up His visible Church. Thus, some Pastours will only admit two or three to be guests at the Lord's Table, allowing no wedding garment, but what is of their own spinning: and others, with their uncharitable hands, blur the names of all their acquaintances out of the Book of Life, as if they were keepers of His Registers and Rolls; and will only have seats kept in the Church triumphant, for three or four Sisters, who are so frugal of their devotions, as to spare

spare them at home, to the end they may be liberal in publick. But both these should consider, that the new *Jerusalem* is said to have more gates then one; that *John* in his *Revelation* tells us, that numberless numbers were seen following the Lamb; and that it is not probable, that the wise Framers of the world made such a spacious dwelling as heaven, to be inhabited by so inconsiderable a number: whereas hell (hell in the geography of believed tradition) is only the small kernel of this small shell *the earth*. I know, that many are called and few chosen; and that the way is strait, and few enter in at it: But we should consider, that these chosen, are said to be few, in respect only of these many who are called: which is most certain; for ten parts of eleven are Pagans or Mahumetans, (and all are called) of that eleventh part, many are malicious Hereticks; and amongst the residue many are flagitious and publick sinners; So that albeit the greatest part of the regular members of the visible Church were sav'd, yet the number would be small in comparison of these others: The body of the visible Church, must

(like all other bodies) be compounded of contrary elements. And albeit I am not of opinion, that this body should be suffer'd to swell with humours, yet I would not wish, that it should be macerated with purgations. It's nails (though but excrementitious parts) should not be so nearly pared, as that the body may bleed; yet, they should be so pared, as that Christians may not scratch one another. They should feed, not upon blood, but milk: and they are unmannerly guests, who will not suffer others to sit at their Masters table with them.

It pleases my humour to contemplate, how, that albeit all Religions war against one another; yet, are all of them governed by the same principles, and even by these principles, in effect, which they seem to abominate. Thus, albeit the cessation of miracles be cryed down by many, yet, do the most bigot relate, what miracles have been wrought by the founders of their Hierarchies, and what prophecies they have oraculously pronounced. And seeing all confess, that God, in our dayes, breaks the prosperous upon the same Wheel, on whose
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top they did but lately triumph, making *fortune* adopt the oppressed in their vice; why should we talk so much of the ceasing of miracles? For, doubtless, these effects are in policy, as contrary to nature, as are the swimming of iron, or sweetning of rivers; or rather more: Seeing in the first, mans will is forc'd (without which, such revolutions could not be effectuated) whereas in the last, dull and sensual qualities are only wrested; which as they are not so excellent, so, doubtless, are not able to make such resistance as the Soul of man: Yea, I should rather think, that the world being become old, must, doubtless, be more dim-sighted (as all old things are) then formerly; and therefore, God doth now present greater objects of admiration to our eyes then He did formerly: For, man is become so atheistical, that if God did not press His meditations with such infallible testimonies of the being of an irresistible power, he would doubtlesse, shake of all resolutions of submitting. Thus, we see that in all the tract of *John's Revelations*, miracles grow still more frequent, the nearer the world

draweth to its grave; and, like all other bodies, the weaker it becomes, the more subject it is to all alterations, and the lesse is nature able to resist. And it would appear, that if miracles were requisite at first, for the establishment of Religion, even when no older Religion was to cede it, and to make an *exit* at its entry; much more, should miracles be necessary, for fixing any Religion against the received constitutions of a previously settled Church. But to prosecute my first designe, it is remarkable, that albeit infallibility be not by all, conceded to any militant Church; yet, it is assumed by all: Neither is there any Church under the Sun, which would not fix the name of Heretick, and account him (almost) reprobate, who would refuse to acknowledge the least rational of their Principles; and thus these Church-men pull up the ladders from the reach of others, after they have by them scalded the walls of preferment themselves. That Church-men should immerse themselves in things civill, is thought excentrick to their sphere, even in *ordine ad spiritualia*: And yet, even the

the *Capuchins*,² who are the greatest pretenders to abstract Christianity and Mortification, do, of all others, dipth most in things civill. The *Phanaticks* enveigh against Presbyterian Gowns. The *Presbyterian* tears the Episcopal lawn Sleeves, and thinks them the whore of *Babel's* shirt. The *Episcopist* flouts at the popish Robes, as the livery of the beast. The *Antinomian* emancipates his disciples from all obedience to the Law. The *Protestant* enjoyns good works, and such are commanded, but place no merit in them. The *Roman-Catholick* thinks he merits in his obedience. The *Phanatick* believes the Lords Supper but a ceremony, though taken with very little outward respect. The *Presbyterian* allows it, but will not kneel. The *Episcopist* kneels, but will not adore it. The *Catholick* mixeth adoration with his kneeling. And thus, most of all Religions are made up of the same elements, albeit their asymbolick qualities predomine in some more then in others. And if that maxim hold, that *magis & minus non variant speciem*, we may pronounce all of them to be one Religion,

The Church, like the river *Nilus*, can hardly condescend where it's head lies; and all condescend that the Church is a multitude of Christians, so joyn all their opinions, and you shall find that they will have it to have, like the multitude, many heads. But in this (as in all Articles, not absolutely necessary for being saved) I make the Laws of my country to be my Creed; and that a clear decision herein is not absolutely necessary for Salvation, is clear from this, that many poor Clowns shall be saved, whose conscience is not able to teach their judgements how to decide this controversie, wherein so many heads have been confounded, so many have been lost, and so many have been shrewdly knockt against one another; from which flinty collisions, much fire, but little light, hath ever burst forth.

God, by His Omniscience, foreseeing, that it was too dazeling a sight for the pur-blind eyes of man's soul, to behold Him invironed with the rayes of divine Majesty, did bestow upon us, three mirrours, wherein we might contemplate him (as we use to look upon the
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Sun in a tub of water, not daring eye His native splendor) the one was the mirrour of the Law, the second is the works of the Creation, and the third is the Soul of man, which He Himself hath told us is framed after his own glorious Image.

As for the first mirrour, the Law; God knowing that *instinct*, or as we term it, a *natural conscience*, were compleat digests of all that man was to observe. He did make that mirrour very little, a volume of only two pages; but that mirrour is, of late, so mullered about, by marginal Notes and Commentars, that the mirrour it self is almost over-spread by them; and it is very observable, that in the holy Registers, the Law is still abridged, but we never see it enlarg'd: For, albeit the fundamental Laws of both Tables were packed up in narrow bounds, yet our Saviour sums them in these two, *fear the Lord thy God with all thy heart,* and, *love thy neighbour as thyself.* And the Apostle Paul in his Divine Epistles, professes, that he desires to know only Christ, and Him crucified: So, that I am confident, that if our Savi-
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our were to preach in person, once more to the world; He would inveigh against our Casuists, as much as He did against the *Jewish* Talmudists; for, the one as well as the other, are equally guilty of burdening the shoulders of weak Christians, with the unnecessary trash of humane inventions. For, I remember to have seen a late Casuist, dispute contentiously amongst his other cases, whether Tobacco, taken in the morning, did break a commanded fast or not? To which, after a feaverish conflict, his wisdom, forsooth, returns this oraculous answer; *That if Tobacco be taken at the nose, it breaks not the fast, but if it be taken at the mouth, then it breaks the fast.* Which, because I made a Collaſſion betwixt the Casuists and the Talmudists, I shall onely mention out of the Talmude (which was the *Jews* comment upon the Law) a case, exactly parallel to this: wherein is decided, that if a man carrie a burden on the Sabbath day, upon both his shoulders, then he is guilty of breach of Sabbath, but that he is not guilty if he carry it upon one shoulder. As to my owne private judgement, (which I submit

I submit to my Spiritual Tutors) I think, that seeing the Conscience of man, is the same faculty with the Judgement when conversant about Spiritual Employments, (as the word *omniudians*, which imports a knowledge reflexive upon a man's own self, doth abundantly evidenc:) that therefore, as there are Judgements of different tempers; so there are likewise Consciences of different frames: and which vary as much amongst themselves, as natural constitutions do. And therefore, as the same Dose would prove noxious to one constitution, wherein another would find his health; so in one and the same act, that resolution may be saving to one Conscience, which may condemn another: for, seeing God hath kindled a torch in each mans breast, by whose flame he may see what path he should beat: in which sense it is said, *Prov. 20. 27. That the understanding of man is the Candle of the Lord*; & can that light mislead? And seeing man must be answerable according to what it prescribes to him, doubtless it is fitter that he should hearken to the reiterated dictates of his Conscience, than to the resolution of any School-casult: and
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that for the same reason, that it is more rational to obey the Law it self, than the wisest Lawyer, who may either be deceived himself, or have a design to deceive others. For if God hath endued man with every thing necessary for working out the work of his own Salvation, with fear and trembling, He hath doubtlesse bestowed upon him an internal Touch-stone, by whose test he may discern betwixt good and evil; seeing to command man to walk uprightly, and not to bestow on him eyes to see the road, were to command a blind man to walk, and to punish him if he went astray. And as the composure of man's body, would be imperfect and manck, if he wanted a palate to discern betwixt the taste of what is wholesom, or what is putrid; So if the soul of man were not able to know its own duty, and by the palate of a natural Conscience, to difference betwixt lawful and unlawful: certainly the soul might be thought to be but ill appointed. Thus, beasts are by an intrinsic principle taught their duty, and do accordingly shun or follow what is convenient for them, without consulting any thing from without. And shall man
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be less perspicacious, or more defective than these? As also seeing man is oftentimes by thousands of occasions, removed far from the assistance of Chair or Pulpit-informers; and in that his retiredness, hath most of these cases to be resolved: it were absurd to think that he then wants sufficiency of help for their resolution. And it is most observable in Scripture, that men are oft check'd for quenching the Spirit, but never for not consulting Casuists. I know it may be thought, that when the soul of man rages at sometime in a Feaver of Lust, Revenge, or some such sin, that then the Conscience may rave; Yet I dare say, that albeit the soul, out of an inordinate desire to enjoy its own pleasures, may set its invention a work, to palliate the sinfulness of what it desires; yet by some secret knell, the Conscience sounds still its reproof. And I dare say, that never man erred without a check from his Conscience; nor that few have sinned after an approbation obtained from his Conscience of what he was about: and when we assent to these Doctors, is it not because our Consciences, or our Judgments (which are the same) assent, to what they

they inform? which evidences, that our Consciences are more to be believed, then they, by that rule, *Propter quod nunquamquod est tale, &c.* but to convince us of the folly of our addrestes to these Doctors, it may, and often doth fall out, that that may be a sin in me, which a Casuist pronounces to be none, as if my breast did suggest to me, that it were a sin to buy Church-lands; if there-after I did buy them, it were doubtlesse a sin, albeit my Doctors, following the Canons of their particular Church, assured me, that the sale of Church-lands were no sinne in it self. I am confident then, that this Casuist-divinity, hath taken its rise from the desire Church-men had to know the mystery of each man's breast, and to the end, nothing of import, might be undertaken without consulting their Cell; persuading men, that *in ordine ad spiritualia*, their Consciences, and consequently their Salvation, may be interested in every civil affair. And to confirm this, it is most observable, that this Trade is most used by *Iesuits* & Innovators, who desire to know all intrigues and subvert all States; whereas the Primitive Church knew no such

such Divinity, neither have its Doctors left any such Volumes.

It may be urged; that seeing the Conscience is but a reflex act of the Judgement; that as the Judgement is an unsure guide, the Conscience cannot pretend to be infallible; and that the one, as well as the other, is tutor'd by the fallacious principles of *sense* and *custom*: And I myself have seen my Land-lady, in *France*, as much troubled in Conscience for giving us flesh to eat in Lent, as if she had cast out the flesh of a Christian to be devoured by Dogs; and so Atheism may attribute to custome, these inclinations whereby we are acted on to believe a Deity; and may tell us, that the Mahumetans find themselves as much prickt in Conscience, for transgressing their Prophets Canons, as we for offending against the moral Law. And thus the adoring of a Deity might have at first been brooded in the Counsel-chamber of a States-mans head, and yet might have been, at that time by the vulgar, and thereafter by the wisest pates, worshipped with profound respects: Yet, if we pry narrowly into this conceit, we shall find in it something

of instinct previous to all forgeries possible. For, what was it (I pray you) which encouraged, or suggested to these Politicians, that such a thing as the Deity might be dissembled to their people for their imposing that cheat, pre-supposed some pre-existing notion of it? Or, how entered that fancie first in their wild heads? Or, how could so many contemporary, yet far distant, Legislators, fall upon the same thoughts, especially, it being so remote from *sense*; and for framing of which *idea*, their experience could never furnish a pattern? Conscience then must be something else then the fumes of Melancholy, or, Capricio's of Fancy; for else, roaring Gallants, who are little troubled, or can easily conquer all other fancies, would not be so haunted by these pricking pangs; which if they were not infallibly divine, behooved to be merely ridiculous, and to want all support from reason or experience.

There is another fyle of cases of Conscience, which is a Cadet of that same family; and these are such cases as were the brood of these late times, which, like Insects and unclean creatures, may
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be said *generari ex patri materia*: an instance whereof, was that famous Sister, who ask'd if she was oblig'd to execute her Cat for killing a Mouse upon the Sabbath. This was a Theology, taught by old doting Wives, and studied by State-expectants, who, to gain applause, and in hope to mount preferments Saddle, made use of this gilded Scirrop. I shall not inveigh against this foppery, seeing it hath not possess't mens conceit so long, as to have prescribed the title of Divinity; but, like a meteor, which, because it is fixt to no Orb, and is but a mass of inflamed vapours, doth therefore disappear immediately, how soon its substance flashes out; and its ashes are now entomb'd in the same clay with its brother twain, that pious *New sense*, wherein God Almighty was treated with in familiar and not in superiour.

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CHAP. VIII.

Of the Scriptures.

AS God did light the Candle of a private Conscience, in each private breast; So hath He hung up the lamp of the Scriptures, in the body of His Church; and these we may call the Conscience of the Church, whilest triumphant. Which some, by the breath of their vanity, and storms of their passion, endeavour to blow out; whilest others, make no other use of its Light, then to shew them where to find a jest. And within the armes of this division, lie folded, all the prophane race of mankind. As to these first (who should be first, because they are Satan's first-born, and so deserve a double portion of this reproof) they contend, that the Scriptures are written in a mean and low stile; are in some places too mysterious, in others too obscure; contain many things incredible, many repetitions, and many contradictions. But these miscreants should consider,

consider, that much of the Scriptures native splendor is impaired by its Translators, who fearing to fall within the verge of the curse pronounced against such as should pair from, or adde to, any thing contained in that divine Book, were, and are willing, that their Translation should want rather the lustre, then meaning of the Original. As also of all Tongues, I believe the Hebrew admits least of a Translation; especially into Northern Languages: for as these Nations differ least in their expressions, who, because of their commerce or contiguity, have the most frequent converse: So doubtlesse, the *Jews* and we, by this Rule, should in language hold the least correspondence. And because there is no pure fountain of this Tongue left, besides the Bible, it must be hard to understand its expressions, wherein the Translators can find little or no help from the variety and collation of Authours. And seeing this Book was pen'd indifferently, for all Ages, Nations, and Sexes, it was fit that its stile should have been condescending: for these who are tall, can pull the fruit which hangs low, whereas these

who are low, cannot pull what peaches high. And it is very observable, that where the fruit is greatest and ripest, there the branch whereon it hangs, bows lowest. When God appeared to *Elijah*; *1 Kin. 19.* there came first a terrible wind; thereafter a great earthquake, and then fire; and yet God was in none of these, but spoke in the shrill small voice. His divine Providence hath so order'd it, that our conviction cannot be ascrib'd to the fard of Eloquence nor flight of Logic; but meely to the truth of what is therein represented: our Saviour, will with clay and spittle, illuminate our eyes, as He did these of the other blind man in the Gospel. And such is the strength of His divine Arm, that He can vanquish Satan, misbelief and ignorance with any weapon. And as we think the Sun's circumference but little, because it is situated so far above us; So we conclude these truths and excellencies but mean, because they are plac'd above our frail reach, and will blame the Scriptures, when the fault lurks in our selves; that great Physician will cure us, like an artist, with simples specifick for our disease, and
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not like a *Charlatan*, with perfum'd and gilded nothings. It is not alwayes the best mettall, which carries the pleasingest *impressa*; nor doth the painted candle cast the clearest light. There are many things in Scripture, which because of our frailty, appear (like a staff in the waters) to be crooked, albeit they be straight. Why *Abraham* should have kill'd his son *Isaac*; or the *Israelites* have borrowed and not restored the Egyptian Ear-rings, staggers not my belief; for these belong'd to God, and neither to *Abraham*, nor the *Egyptians*: and so God might have given order to any He pleased to receive them: and these who obey'd, were no more guilty then such are, who by order from the Master, receive what he did formerly lend to others. And as to its repetitions they differ, no doubt, from one another; albeit we (who think all things removed, though by a little distance from us, of one shape) judge ill, in judging otherwayes. And as an excellent person hath well observed, God hath appointed these reiterated expressions, to be as so many witnesses, to con-

vince Hereticks and others, who should call the meaning of any one place in question, or wrest it by what precedes or follows it.

As to these others, in whom the wine of Gods consolations, (by being winded in the crackt vessels of their heads) turns into the tart vinegar of prophane Satyres, I condole their condition: for, that stomach must be very corrupt, wherein the best of aliment putrifies most: and probably, that indigested milk, being converted into excrementitious bile and humours, may cast them in a fever which shall never cool to all eternity. I pity likewise these, who, out of an inadvertent (and as they think, sinlesse) humour, jest with these divine truths; like foolish children, who love rather to sport with their meat than eat it. These, albeit they intend not to prophane Scripture, yet, they vilifie it. And we may say of the Bible as of taking of Gods name in our mouths, which must not only, not be done upon designe, to blaspheme and diffame Him; but must not be taken but upon necessity, and, like the Shew-bread, must be used only when

when we are in straits. I have been too guilty of this last sin my self; and therefore, least I should make no atonement, I have rather resolved to appear before the world, in the dust and sackcloth of this silly Discourse, a Pennance really, to me very great.

When I consider how various and innumerable are the actions of men, and that in all these, they need particular instructions from above the Poles, I admire why there are so many passages in Scripture, from which our necessity may expect no assistance. And therefore lest I should think, that in Scripture there is any waste of words, I am induced to believe, that there run many hid allegories from *Genesis* to *Johns Revelations*; wherein the mystical sense deserves likewise the name of God's word: Might we not have admired why the story *Hagar* and her bastard is there voluminously described, and what the Church or private Devotion was concerned therein, if *Paul, Gal. 4. 24.* had not discovered the mystery to us? By which things, another thing is meant: For, these two mothers are the

two Testaments, the one which is *Agar*, of mount *Sinai*, which gendereth unto bondage, &c. I might here relate many excellent allusions to prove this, but I shall satisfie my self with one which I did read in one Doctor *Eysar*; who, preaching upon *Joshua* 15. 16. *Then Caleb said, he who smiteth Kirjah-sepher and taketh it, even to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel took it, &c.* saith, that *Caleb* signifies a good heart, *Kirjah-sepher* the City of the Letter, *Achsah* the Vision, *Othniel* God's opportunity. And so the mystical sense runs, a good heart saith, that whoever will take in (and smite, as *Moses* did the rock) the Letter of the word, shall have the vision which lurks under it discovered and given to him. And Gods own time is the only mean for accomplishing this: As also, it is most remarkable, that that City which was called *Kirjah-sepher* before it was taken in, or, the city of the Letter, was, after it was conquered, called *Debir*, which signifies an Oracle; so that the Word or Letter is no Oracle, till it be once, as it were, taken in and overcome. Since the read-
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ing of which Sermon, I believe that one may profit more by an *Hebrew Lesson*, than by a thousand *English Lectures*.

These who detract from Scripture, by attributing the production of miracles, to natural causes, do not much disparage the power of God, but (though against their depraved intention) cry rather up his Omnipotency: For certainly, if these miracles were produced by secondary causes, then doubtlesse, that productive faculty was bestowed upon them by the Almighty; and if he can make the creatures produce such strange effects, much more is he able to effectuate them himself; as it is more difficult, for a great Master, to form curious and admirable Characters when he leads a scholars hand, then when he writes them with his own; for, such help may be called *resisting assistance*. I can not likewise but blame many of our Preachers, who rather break then open holy Texts; and rather make new meanings, suiting with their private designs, then tell the meaning of the Spirit. Who would not have laugh'd to hear

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a Presbyterian observe, from the first chapter of *Genesis*, first verse, that whilst *Moses* relates what God made, he speaks nothing of *Bishops*; by which it was evident (said *Don Quixot's* Chaplain) that *Bishops* were not of divine Institution; a conceit as ridiculous as that of a Priest, who hearing *Maria* spoken of for to signify *Sea*, did brag that he had found the *Virgin Mary* named in the old Testament. Albeit I think preaching no part of divine Worship, hearing being no adoration; yet, love I to go to Church, were it but to see a multitude met together, to confesse that there is a God: But, when I go to hear I care not whom, knowing that Christ elected Fisher-men to preach down infidelity, when it was in the ruff of it's pride: and that *Paul* (the most signal Trophee of our Christian Faith) was sent for confirmation, not to *Peter* or *James* at *Jerusalem*, but to *Ananias*, one of the meanest amongst the Disciples. And seeing our Salvation, by preaching, is a miracle; it is still so much the greater, by how much weaker the instruments are. When the Pulpit was a mount *Sinai*, from which

which the Law was thundered, or a mount of *Olives*, whereon our Saviours glorious transformation was to be seen, then were Sermons to be honoured; but since it is become a mount *Calvar*, whereon our blessed Saviour suffers daily, by scandalous railings, Sermons are become unfavoury for the most part. I hate to see that divine place made either a Bar, whereat secular quarrels are, with passion, pleaded; or a Stage, whereon revenge is, by Satyres, satisfied; or, a School-chair, from which unintelligible questions are mysteriously debated; but amongst all these innovations, introduced by our infant Divines, I hate none more then that of giving reason for proving the *Doctrine*, which being Scripture it self, can be proved by nothing that is more certain. As for instance, when the Doctrine is, *that God loved us freely*, how can this be proved more convincingly than thus, *my Text sayes it*? and that is *idem per idem*, a most unlogical kind of probation. When I then go to Church, I should love to spend my time in praises and prayers; which as they are the only parts of adoration,

tion; so are they the natural employments of the Church, either Militant or Triumphant: Yet, it displeases me to hear our young Pulpitiers scritch and cry, like *Bael's* Priests, as if God were no nearer them then the visible Heavens.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Moral Law.

IT honours much our employment, that God Almighty was the first and great Law-giver; and that our blessed Saviour styles himself our Advocate. And it is an amazing wonder that we are tyed only by ten Laws; whereof seven were enacted doubtlesse for our advantage and respect; more immediate the security of the creature then the honour of the Creator; and are such restraints as men behoved to have laid upon one another, and which nature layes upon usall. And albeit I laugh at the Jewish Cabala, which sayes, that the moral Law was written, two thousand years before *Moses*, in black letters at the back of

a clear burning fire: Yet, can I not approve *Tertullians* wit, who endeavours to find all these ten in the prohibition made to *Adam*. There are indeed some sinnes which scarce a consequence can bring within the verge of these Commandments. As for instance, Drunkenesse: Yet, these are such as are so destructive to our nature, that there needs no Law be made against them. So that the Priest hit wily, to whom that sin being confessed, enjoyned as a Penance, their being drunk a second time; which makes me conclude, that if Drunkenesse were to be ranged under any of these Laws, it would fall most naturally under that, *Thou shalt not kill*. Albeit the fourth Commandment seems to respect only the honour of God, and that the creature seems to be no wayes bettered by it: Yet, our more serious observations will discover, that all belabouring creatures, as it were, expect an ease the seventh day more then any other. Whether it be, that nature is by custome framed to that expectation, I cannot tell: But, we see that God choic'd that number to be the year of Jubilee amongst his
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his own people, and that it is the period of all the several consistencies in our life, infancie, pubertie, &c. And for this reason Physicians observe, that the child born in the seventh moneth is stronger then that which is born in the eighth; because in the seventh it is come to a knot, by passing whereof, in the eighth it is in a state of imperfection: But, what the mysterie of this holy Climaterick is, I referr till we come to that Sabbath of rest, whereat we ordinarily arrive after seven times nine years hath snowed upon us.

We may think, that if God had intended, that one and the same day of the week should have been appropriated to have been a Sabbath, He had designed each day by a special term, and had commanded, that a day of such a designation, should have been sequestered for a Sabbath; and that by designing only the seventh day He did leave a liberty to employ any day of the seventh for that use. Yet, it is remarkable, that *Moses* nor the Jewish Church durst not attempt the change of their new-years day; but that the Almighty was pleased to bestow a peculiar sanction upon
that

that alteration : For, *Exod.* 12. 2. He commands, that the moneth wherein the Israelites came from *Egypt*, should be, by them, reputed the first month of their year. Wherefore, seeing each Nation chalks out a divers Sabbath, it would appear that there is something of humour in it as well as of Religion. The *Venerous* Mahumetan chooseth Friday, or, *dies Veneris*; The *dull Jew* dull *Saturns* day; The *warlike Parthians* Tuesday, or, *Mars-day*; The *cheery Europeans* *Sunday*. And albeit the Christians are influenced only by inspiration; yet, I am confident, that the heathens did follow that for Religion, which suited best with their natural temper. But this is a meditation, which should travel nowhere beyond a man's private breast, lest it meet with enmity and beget scandal.

It would puzzle a heathen much to hear, that he who breaks one of these Laws, is guilty of the breach of all: But, it troubles not me, seeing all these Laws are made to shew our obedience, and the breach of any one of them shewes our contempt of him who is the author of all.

all. And it may be this was typified in *Moses's* breaking both Tables with one passionate fling, after he came down from the Mount: For, if this breaking of them had not been pre-designed for some hid end, doubtless he had been reprov'd for his negligence. However, we may from this learn the desperate nature of passion, which made *Moses*, who was the meekest man upon earth, break all the Laws of God in one act. It might also be argued, that seeing all the Laws of the second Table were enacted for, and respect ultimately, the advantage of Man, that where man is not wronged, there the Law cannot be broke. And thus, if a married Man should have liberty from his wife to take another woman, this could be no more reputed adultery, then it could be reputed theft to take what belongs to our neighbour, himself consenting; and that for this cause, *Jacobs* begetting children with his wifes maids, is not in Scripture reprov'd as adultery, because they were given to him by her self for that effect: but seeing the practice of all the world condemns this conclusion, far be it for me to expresse it further

further; yet this is but a sophism, for seeing our bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, we can no more bestow them upon such uses, then a Church-Warden can give the use of the Church to Taverners.

CHAP. X.

Of the Judicial Law.

Albeit the Judicial Law (which may be justly called the Judicious Law) is commonly reputed to be but the municipal Law of the *Jews*; yet seeing it was delivered in almost one context with that Law which was thundred from mount *Sinai* with so much pomp, and is ingrossed in the Books of holy Truth, and seems nearer related to reason then any other Law, I admire why it should not be religiously observed by all Nations: especially seeing, as it is, the exactest picture of Justice that ever was drawn; so it hath this of a picture in it, that it seems to look directly upon all who behold it, albeit they be placed (amongst themselves) indirectly,

directly opposite situations and stances. Thus this Law suits even with contrary tempers, and the unequal complexions of all Nations. I know that the Ceremonial Law is likeways insert amongst the other holy Canons, and yet binds not us who live under the jurisdiction of the Gospel: But, the reason of this seems to be; because these did immediately concern the *Jewish Church*, and were conversant about these holy things. And so, seeing the Old Testament is a description of their Hierarchy, and of God's way of working in these times, I wonder not to see the Ceremonies amidst other sacred Truths, and yet not observed, seeing they are expressly abrogate. But, if the judicial Law, which respected not the Hierarchy of that Church, was obligatory only whilst the *Jewish State* was in being, I admire why the Spirit of God took so much pains, first to pen it, and then to deliver it so Canon-like to posterity. And since it is a principle in Law and reason, that Laws must still stand in vigor till they be expressly abrogate, and must not be derogated from by consequences or presumptions, I admire why
this

this Law, which God hath enervate by no express Text, should be now look'd upon as Statutes no-wife *A-la-mode*. It is true, that our Saviour, when the woman, convicted of adultery, was brought to Him, did not, according to that Law, pronounce the sentence of death against her; whence some think, that Churchmen, following their Masters example, should not give their suffrages in criminal cases, and have only *Stylus inaspexit*, a bloudlesse Jurisdiction; for, they are appointed to be Nurses, not Chyrurgeons. But, it is as true, that our Saviour professed in all the tract of His life, that He came not to be a Judge in things temporal, and His design in that place was only to convince them of their owne sins, and not to absolve her, nor to abrogate the Law: and therefore He desired him who was freest from sin, to cast the first stone at her. And whereas it is conjectured, that these words which our Saviour stoop'd down to write in the clay, immediately thereafter was in abrogation of that Law; this is Geomancy more wild then any lesson which is alledged to have been read in the mysterious

face of Heaven, and should never be taught but in a Rabbies Cabalastick Gown. And whereas it is alledged that there are many precepts in that *corpus Juris*, which respects only the humor of the *Jews*, I admire why that can be urged; for certainly, theft, murder, and these other crimes punished there, are the same crimes which reigns amongst us; and so why not punishable after the same manner? Neither are the humors of these *Jews* more different from ours, then was the *genius* of the *Romans*; and yet, few or no Nations refuse to cast their modern Laws in that antique mould. And it is very probable, that as God did, in the moral Law, teach man how to be just in his own actions, so He would likewayes instruct him by a judicial Law, how to administer Justice to others.

What can perpetuate a Law more then that the Authority whereby it is enacted should be obligatory in all ages, and the reason whereon it is founded should be eternal? and in what Laws do these two qualities appear more, or so much, as in the judicial Laws of the *Jews*, where the eternal Law-giver was Legislator, and the occasion,

occasion, productive of them, seemed rational (and necessary) to His infallible omniscience? and if in any of these statutes, our purblind Judgements cannot see a present conveniency, we should rather impute that to our own simplicity, then charge it as a guilt upon His divine Statutes; and are there not many municipal Laws in each Country, which have no hedge about them to keep them untrampled upon by wanton and too curious wits? But, that excellent Maxime, *Omnium qua fecerunt Majores nostri, non est reddenda ratio, nè que certa sunt, incerta redderentur*; a reason must not be rendred for all that our Ancestors have enacted, lest what is now certain, become then uncertain. Albeit a Law enacted only by humane Authority, seem unreasonable or inconvenient; yet, it retains it's vigor till it be abrogate by the same, or a higher Authority, then that whereby it was first statuted; and the Law sayes, that *nihil est tam naturale quam unumquodq; eodem modo dissolvi, quo colligatum est*. And, seeing the moral and judicial Laws are twisted so together, and are oft incorporated in one statute, as *Levit. 20. 10. Dent. 22.*

22. where adultery is forbidden, and the adulterer is to die the death: how can we think the one half of this Law obligatory for ever, and yet neglect it's other half, wherein the punishment is specified, and which appears to have been the scope of the divine Law-giver? For, the world needed not so much to have been acquainted, that adultery was a sin, as that that sin deserved death; and if we allow our capricious humor the liberty to reject what we think inconvenient, we may at last arrive at that pitch of licentiousness, as to abrogate, by our practice, whatever choaks our present humour.

There are many things much mistaken in that Law, which makes the dissonancy betwixt it and our Law, appear so much the greater. As for instance, it is concluded, that by that Law, no theft was punishable by death; whereof this is given as a reason, because there is no proportion betwixt the goods and life; and that all that a man hath he will give for his life; whereas this argument would prove, that no guilt but murder should be punished with death; and so this dart rather flies over then hits the mark at which

which it is level'd. And if this argument be concluded, why should adultery have been punished with death by that Law, seeing there seems no proportion betwixt that guilt and death? For, if *vita & fama* be in Law *equiparata*, by that same Law, *pecunia est alter sanguis*. But, if there be no proportion betwixt goods and life, and if the punishment of these, when it's aggrag'd to it's greatest height, cannot, in their opinion, reach so far as to be capital: why was it, that by that Law nocturnal thieves might have been killed by those who found them? *Exod.* 22. 2. For, it appears against reason, that more should be permitted to a private and passionate party, then to a dis-interested Judge. And it is clear by *2 Sam.* 12. 5. that theft was in some cases capital: For, there *David* vows, that he who tooke his neighbours one sheep, and spared his own many, should surely dye; which being spoke by a just King to an excellent Prophet, and not reproved, must not be thought a flash of passion, but a well-founded sentence. Where not likewises two thieves crucified by the *Jews* at the same time with our ever glorious Saviour?

which must not be thought a *Romish* execution, seeing the Law of the *Romans* allowed no such punishment for theft: I judge therefore, the reason why murder and adultery were punished with death, rather than all thefts, to have been, because theft may be repaired by restitution, but murder and adultery cannot. And albeit the judicial Law commands restitution only in the theft of an ox or sheep, (things of small moment, and which may be stolen to satisfy rather hunger than lust) yet, I see no limits set to Judges, commanding them not to inflict a capital punishment in extraordinary cases: For certainly, he who steals, may, for ought he himself knows, be about the committing of murder, seeing to steal what should aliment any poor one, is, in effect, the same thing as to murder him. It is much controverted, if this Law prohibits self-murder, and I think it doth: For, we are commanded to love our neighbour as our self; and so, since we are commanded not to kill our neighbour, that same Law must likewise forbid our killing of our selves. But the reason probably, why no expresse Text did forbid that sin, was, because the Spirit

Spirit of God knew that the natural aversion we have against death, would, in this, do more then supply a Law; and that these who would be so desperate as to neglect the one, would never be so pious as to obey the other. Or else, God hath been unwilling, by making such a Law, to intimate to the world, that such a sin might be committed. Yet, it seems strange, that many are in Scripture related, as *Saul*, and others, to have killed themselves, against whom no check stands registrated in holy Records. But, I stop here, intending to bestow a whole Tractate upon the judicial Law, a task hitherto too much neglected.

The second mirrour, wherein God Almighty is to be seen, is that of His Creatures; and in that a *Virtuoso* may contemplate in His infinite power, as in the other he may see His admirable justice. It is very observable, that when God, or His Prophets, would prove his greatness, the Sun, Orion, and the Leviathan, are made use of as arguments. And when the Spirit of God describes the inimitable knowledge of *Solomon*, bestowed upon him by God, as an extraordinary mark of His favour, he
sayes

sayes not, that he understood the quirks of Philosophy, or notions of Divinity; but, it is said, that he knew all from the Cedar of *Lebanon* to the Hysope that grows upon the wall. And in earnest, it is strange, that when Man comes into the gallery of this World, he should take such pleasure in gazing upon these ill-drawn fictions, which have onely past the pencil of humane wit, and should not fix his admiration upon these glorious creatures, which are the works of that great Master; in framing whereof, God is content to be said to have spent six days, to the end, that man might admire the effects of so much pains; whereas His omnipotency might, with one fiat, have summoned them all to appear, apparell'd in these gorgeous dresses which now adorns them. And it is as strange, that man, having that huge volumn of the Creation to revolve, wherein is such an infinite number of curious tale-duces, to feast his eyes with curiocity, and to furnish his soul with solid knowledge; he should notwithstanding spend so much oyl and sweat, in spinning out *ens rationis*, *materia prima*, *potentia*, *abedientialis*, and such

such like unintelligible trash, which, like, cob-webs, are but envenomed dust curiously wrought. And because the Gross of mankind was so gross, as not to understand Gods greatness by the abstract *idea's* which instinct presented to him: Therefore, to teach that sensual croud, by the trunch-manrie of sence, He hath bestowed upon them this mirrour, wherein they may see how infinite He is in power, who made *Nothing* so fruitful, as to bud forth in this glorious crop of creatures, which now inhabits the surface of Heaven and Earth.

CHAP. XI.

Of Monsters.

I Admire that such Philosophers as have had their faces wash'd at the font, can allow of Monsters, and define them to be the preter-intentional works of nature, wherein nature miss'd of her design, and was not able to effectuate what she intended: for, if *nature* and *providence* signifie the same thing in the Dictionary

nary of Christianity, it were blasphemy to think, that *Providence* could not be able to effectuate what it once designed. All the creatures are indeed but as clay in the hand of this great Potter; but, it were impious to think, that His Art can be mistaken in framing any Vessels: wherefore, I am apter to believe, that all these creatures which the Schools term *Monsters*, are rather the intentions, then errors of *nature*; and that as *nature* doth nothing without designe, so it doth nothing without success. And thus I rather admire nature in these, for her cunning variety, then upbraid her with insufficiency and weaknesse. Neither term I an Hermaphrodite, man or woman, according to the prevalency of that Sex which predomines in it, no more then I think that the Painter, when he hath delineated curiously an exact Mermaid, resolved to draw either a woman or fish, and not one distinct creature, piec'd up of both. And doubtless this error did at first proceed from mans vanity; who concluded that every frame which answered not that *idea*, which resides in him, was the effect of *chance*, & not of *nature*; as if *na-*

ture had been obliged to leave in the bibliothek of his head, the Original of all such pieces as were to pass it's Press.

Seeing God, in his survey of the Creation, called all that He had made *good*, because they were usefull, I conclude, that those are the best which are the most usefull. And albeit I condemn prodigality of ignorance; in preferring a Diamond to a Capon or Sheep; yet, do I not condemn such of vanity, as shine with these sparkling creatures: For, since God made *nothing*, which He did not destinate for some use, and seeing most of these serve for no use else, doubtless, the wearing of them is most allowable. Yet, can I not allow of these gaudy compounds, which men create to themselves; as if something had been still wanting after the Creation was finished; wherein man could supply God, and Art Nature. The bestowing of a hundred pounds upon a Tulip, or a thousand on a Picture, are not to me the meer rants of luxury; but are courses pre-ordained by the Almighty, for returning to poor Artisans, that money, which oppression did at first most unjustly screw from their weary hands.

hand's. It is our ignorance of nature's mysteries which perswades us, that some, if not most of the creatures, serve rather for beautifying the universe, then for supplying necessity; an error which experience daily confutes; So, those herbs which of old cloathed only the uninhabited mountains, do now deserve their own place in Apothecaries shops. And it is most observable, that the Scurvy grows nowhere but where the disease rages, which is cured by it. Seeing God loved variety in the Creation, He cannot hate curiosity in man, these two being correspondents; and the one without the other would be but as flowers to the blind, or musick to the deaf. I laugh at the fruitless pilgrimages of such as travel to *Joppa* or *China*, to satisfy their curiosity; there being a *Tredaskins* closet in each Tulip, and a *Solomon's Court* in each Lilly of the field. And seeing mens tempers are so various, it was no wonder that the creatures (which were made for his use) should have been made proportional to his humor: But, seeing art hath in many things copied Nature to the life, I think not the Symmetry nor variety to be seen among

the creatures such an infallible argument for proving the being of a God, as is *instinct*, which all the art of men and Angels cannot counterfeit; and herein is it, that that grand Magician must acknowledge the finger of his Maker; seeing here his own art fails.

These who expect equal excellency in all the parts of this curious Fabrick, do not understand wherein its Symmetrie consists, All the strings of an Instrument sound not equally high, and yet they make up the harmony: the face of the earth looks in some places deform'd and parcht; and yet it is there the mother of rich mines (as if God intended to bestow a great portion where he bestows an ill face) and whar we think deformities, were placed there as patches, and are no more blemishes than the spots are to the Leopards.

I confels, that at first it puzzled much my enquiry, for what end these Mountains were made so near neighbours to the divided Clouds: and I once imagin'd, that these were rather the effects of the flood, then creatures first intended: and were but the rubbish and mud which these impetuous waters had heap'd

up

up in a mass: But, I was thereafter dissuaded from this conjecture, by the 8. Chap. *Prov.* where wisdom, proving it's antiquity, says, that it was with God before the Heavens were prepared, and the Mountains settled; by the scope of which Text, it is clear, that the Heavens, Hills, and the rest of the Creation, are said to bear one date. It is then more probable, that God foreseeing that the lust of conquest would, like the Needle of the Compass, look oft North, as is evident by comparing all the Monarchies (first the *Assyrian*, then the *Grecian*, then *Roman*, now *German*) did therefore bound ambition, as it were with high Hills, (albeit since Ambition hath found a way to climb over them) as if He told them, that they should march no further. Thus, it is very observable, that the northern parts of one Kingdome, are alwayes more barren then the Southern limits of the Countrey which lies to the North of it, The North of *England* more mountainous and barren then the south of *Scotland*, albeit it lye nearer the Sun; the South of *England* more pleasant and fertile then the North of *France*; and the South of

France

France then the north of *Italy*, &c.

We must likewayes consider, that nature bruised its face so when it fell in *Adam*, that it did then contract many of these blemishes which now deform it; and that as it waxes old, its native beauty is the more deformed by furrowed wrinkles. We cannot judge what it was in health, by its present distempered condition, wherein it groans and travel- leth in pain, as the Apostle tells us. And the differences betwixt these two states may be known from this, that God, when He compleated the Creation, saw that all was good; whereas *Solomon*, having reviewed it in his time, saw all to be vanity and vexation of spirit.

CHAP. XII.

Of Man, and his Creation.

THe third mirror, wherein God is to be admired, is *Man*, This is that noble Creature which God was pleased to mould last of all others, not willing to bring him home, till by the preceding
H Creations

Creations He had plenished his house abundantly for him. And albeit in the Creation of all other Creatures, it is only said, that God spoke and it was: Yet, when Man was to be framed, the cabinet Council of Heaven was called, and it is said [*let us*] as if more art had been to be shewed here, then in all the remanent Fabrick of the terraqueous Globe, and glorious Circles of Heaven. It is likewise very observable, that albeit all the fishes of the Sea were formed by one word, all the beasts of the field by one act, &c. Yet, God was pleased to bestow two upon the Creation of *Man*; by the first, his body was created out of the dust, and thereafter, was breathed in, his soul. And albeit transient mention is only made of all other Creations; yet the history of Mans Creation is twice repeated, once, *Gen. 1. 27.* and again, *2. 7.* And, lest that foreseen deformity, wherewith he was to be besmeared after his fall, should make it be questioned, that at his first creation he had received the *impressa* of Gods Image, this is oft repeated: For, in the *26. v. Gen. 1.* it is said, *Let us make man in our Image*; and then
again,

again, and after our likeness. And in the 27. verse, So God created man in his own Image; and again immediately thereafter, in the Image of God Created he him. Yet, I am confident, that this Image is so bedabbed in the mire of sin, and so shattered by its first fall, and this divine impress, and print, so worn out by our old and vicious habits, that if this genealogy had not been so oft inculcated, we could not but have called it in question, albeit our vanity be ready enough to believe a descent so royal and sublime. Wherefore I must again admire the folly of Athiests, who, by denying a Deity, cloud their own noble birth-right.

But, albeit man be made after Gods Image, yet, that can be no argument to conclude, that therefore God may be made after mans image, or represented under his figure, as the Anthropomorphits foolishly contend, no more, then if we should conclude, that because a Copy may be taken of an Original, therefore an Original may be taken of a Copy. Neither is this representation salv'd from being idolatry, by alledging that the image is

not worshipped, but God, who is represented by it: For, it hath been well observed by an ancient Father, that idolatry in Scripture is called adultery. And it is no good excuse for an adulteress, that she did lye with another because he represented her Husband to her, and resembled him as a Coppy doth its Original: Yet, seeing nothing is roomed in our judgement and apprehension, but what first entred by the wicket of sense, it is almost impossible for man to conceive the *Idea* of any thing but vested with some shape, as each mans private reflections will abundantly convince him.

As the boundless Ocean keeps and shews its well drawn images, whilst it stands quiet, with a face polisht like a chrystal cake, but loses them immediately, how soon its proud waves begin to swell and enrage, to spit its froathy foam in the face of the angry Heavens; so, whilst a Stoical indolency and Christian repose smooths our restless spirits, it is only then, that the soul of man can be said to retain that glorious image of God Almighty, with which it was impressed at
its

its created nativity. But, when the waves of choler begin to roar, or the winds of vanity to blow, then that glorious image is no more to be discerned in him, then the shadows and representations of in-looking objects are to be seen and discerned in the disquieting bosom of the troubled waters.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Immortality of the Soul.

THe stings of a natural conscience, which, according to each mans actions, creat to him either agues of fear, or paradises of joy, do by these ominating presages, convince us of the immortality of the soul; and seeing we see its predictions, both in dreams, in damps of melancholy, and such like enthusiastick fits, followed by suitable events; why may we not likeways believe its predictions as to its own immortality, it being the prudence of a *Virtuoso* to lay hold of every mean, which may allay the rage of his hereditary misfortunes? And to

what end would the soul of man receive such impressions of fear and hope, if, by its mortality, it were not to be staid in a condition, wherein its fears and hopes were to have suitable rewards or punishments? Moreover, seeing God is just, He will punish and reward: and therefore, seeing he punishes and rewards not men according to their merits, or demerits here, there must be doubtless a future state wherein that is to be expected. But, that which convinces my private judgement most of this truth, is, that the noblest Soules, and the sharpest-sighted, do, of all others, most desire the state of separation, and have the weakest attaches to this life; which must doubtless proceed from an assurance of immortality; and that it hath, from the *Pisgab* of its contemplation, got a view of the spiritual *Canaan*: For, seeing the brutishest of Creatures abhors annihilation, as the most averfable ill in nature, doubtless the soul of man which is the most divine of all Creatures, would never appetite this separation, if by it it were to be extinct and to be no more. And how absurd

furd were it to believe, that mans soul should be made after Gods image, and yet conclude it mortal, a quality repugnant to any thing that is divine? As also, how can the soul be thought to perish with the body, seeing these accidents which destroy the body cannot reach it? how can the heat of a Feavor burn, or rheumes drown, that which is not corporeal and cannot be touched? And, seeing mans least peccadilio against God Almighty, is against one who is infinite, were it not absurd to think, that it could be proportionally punished in the swift glass of mans short life; then which, nothing is more finit, or sooner finished.

As the soul is Gods Image, So its products are the Images of His admirable operation. Do not Mathematicians creat Eagles, Doves, and such like automatas? And spring not flowers from the Chymists glasses? And thus art, which is mans off-spring, doth ape nature, which is the workmanship of the Almighty: and therefore, seeing the soul can with one thought grasp both the Poles, can dart out its conceits as far as the

furthest borders of the imaginary spaces, create worlds and order, and disorder, all that is in this, which is already created; its strange to think it to be either corporeal or mortal: For, if it were corporeal and a mass of blood, its actions would be lent and dull, neither could its motion be so nimble and winged, as are the sex of our agile spirits. It were impossible for our narrow heads, to contain all these innumerable *ideas* (which are now in them) if these were all corporeal; and if these be not corporeal, that which produces them must be doubtless incorporeal, seeing *simile generatur a simili*; and dull flesh and blood could never produce such spiritual emanations.

As the Soul is Gods Image, so in this it resembles Him very much, that we can know nothing of its nature without its own assistance; like a dark Lanthorn, or a spy, it discovers every thing to us, except it self. And because it refines us the light of its candle, whilest we are in the quest of its mysteries; therefore it is, that our re-searches of its nature are groping in the dark: and so oft times vain, if not ridiculous. *Aui-*

cenna,

ecma Averroes, and the remnant of that Arabian tribe, admiring its prodigious effect, did attribute our spiritual motions to assisting Angels; as if such admirable notions could not be fathered upon less sublime causes; which *Cardan* likewise thinks, do offer their assistance and light to sensitive Creatures, but that the churlishnesse of their matter will not suffer them to entertain such pure emanations. This disparages so much humanity, making man only a statue, that it were against the souls interest to admit of any such ideas: For, as it tends more to the Artists praise to cause his products move from hid and internal springs, then from extrinseck causes; as we see in Watches and such like. So it is more for the honour of that great Artist, and more suitable to the being and nature of His creatures, that all its operations flow from it self, then from assisting but exteriour coadjutors; which makes me averse from *Aristotles* opinion of the motion of the spheres by intelligences. And it were absurd to think, that men should be blamed or praised for those effects which their assisting Angels could only be
char-

charged with. The *Platonicks* alledged, that all souls existed before their incarceration in bodies; in which state of pre-existence, they were doted with all these spiritual endowments, which shall attend them in the state of separation; and that at their first allyance with bodies, their native knowledge was clouded *μεταφυσικῶς* with the putting off knowledge for a time, till by a *reminiscencia*, their intellectuals revived, as by a resurrection. And *Origen* added; that these souls were, according to their escapes, committed in the state of their primitive separation, yoked with better or worse bodies; a shift taken, in all probability, by him, to evite the apprehension of Gods being unjust, for infusing innocent souls, in bodies which would infect them; and by drawing them into inevitable snares, at last condemn them; or at least their infusion was the imprisoning these who were not guilty; a difficulty which straits much, such as maintain that the soul is not *ex traduce*. What the hazard of this opinion may be, my twilight is not able to discover.

It may be, that the *Stoicks* mistake in making the souls of men to be but parcels, decerpt from that universal *anima mundi* (by which they doubtless meant God Himself) was occasioned by a mistake of that Text, that *God breathed into man's Nostrils, the breath of life*: concluding, that as the breath is a part of the body which breathed it, So the soul behoved to be a part of that divine essence; from which, by a second consequence, they concluded, that the soul, being a part of that divine being, could not suffer, nor undergo any torments; as is asserted by *Seneca*, *Epist.* 29. *Cicero*, *Tusc.* 5. and defended by their successors, those primitive Hereticks, the *Gnosticks*, *Maniches* and *Priscillianists*. But this bastard is not worth the fostering, being an opinion that God hath parts, and man real divinity, and is doubtless a false and flattering testimony given by the soul to it self. For, seeing the soul is, by divine Oracles, told us to be made after God's Image, it can be no more called a part of God, then the picture should be reputed a part of the Painter.

Aristotle

Aristotle like the devil (who because he knows not what to answer, answers ever in engines) tells us, that *Anima* is *πνελιχτις*, a term fixed to exercise the empty braines of curious Pedants, and apter to beget, then explicate difficulties. Neither believe I, that his three souls, which he lodges in man, to wit, the rational, sensitive and vegetative, do differ more amongst themselves, then the will, understanding and fancy differ from the two last; So that his Arithmetick might have bestowed five souls upon man as well as three: But seeing he, and many of his disciples, believe these to be three, and yet these three to be but one; I admire why they should be so nice, as not to believe that pious mystery of the holy Trinity: whereof in my opinion, his trinity of the soul is as apposit an emblem, as was the conceit of a simple Clown, who being askt, how he could apprehend the three glorious persons to be but one? did fold his garment in three pleates, and thereafter drew out all three in one.

As the herauldrie of our reason cannot blazen the souls *impressa*; So can it not help us to line out its descent: and
such

such would appear to be the excellency of that noble Creature; that heaven and earth seem to contend, the which shall be the place of its nativity. Divines (who are obliged to contend for heaven, because they are its more immediate Penfioners) will have it to be created and infused; whereas Philosophers (ambitious to have so noble a compatriot, and willing to gratifie nature, which alimments their sublime meditations) contend, that it is *ex traduce*, and is in generation, the bodies other twinne. And albeit it would appear from Scripture, that God accomplish'd the Creation the first seven dayes, and that nature did then pass Child-bearing: Yet, that, in my judgement, must be meant of the Creation of whole *species*, and not of *inviduals*: And to press the souls not traduction, I shall lend only one argument, not because it is the best, but because it is my own. We see, that there where the soul is confess'd to be *extraduce*, as in bruits and vegetative creatures, that nature, as it were, with a pencil, copies the young from off the old. The young Lyons are still as rapacious and roaring

as were their Syres, from whose loyns they descended: and the Rose being pous'd up by the salt nitre which makes it vegetative, spreads the same leaves, and appears with the same blushes or paleness that beautified its eye-pleasing predecessors. The reason of which continual assimilation, proceeds from the seeds having in its bosome all these qualities and shapes, which appear thereafter in its larger products, whereof they were but a *mappe* or *Index*. Whereas man resembles never, at least not oft, these who are called his parents: the vicious and tall father, having oft low, but vertuous children; which shows, that the soul of man is not derived by generation, and that the soul bestowed upon the sons body, is most different and asymoplick to that which lodged in the father. And this may be further confirmed by that excellent passage, *Prov.* 20. 27. where it is said, that the *understanding of man is the candle of the Lord*. Our Soul is Gods Image, and none can draw that Image but Himself; we are the stamp of His divine nature, and so can only be formed by Himself, who is the glorious Seal.

From

From this divine principle, that mans soul is made after Gods Image, I am almost induced to believe, that *prophecie* is no miraculous gift bestowed upon the soul at extraordinary occasions only, but is a natural (though the highest) perfection of our humane nature: For, if it be natural for the stamp, to have impress'd upon it all the traits that dwell upon the face of the Seal, then it must be natural to the soul, which is God's *impressa*, to have a faculty of foreseeing, since that it is one of God's excellencies. Albeit I confess, that that Stamp is here infinitely bedimm'd and worn off; as also, we know by experience, that men upon a death-bed, when the soul begins (being detached by sickness from the bodies slavery) to act like it self, do foresee and fortell many remote and improbable events: and for the same reason I do think predictions, by dreams, not to be extraordinary revelations, but rather the products natural of a rational soul. And if sagacious men can be so sharp-sighted in this state of glimmering, as to foresee many events which fall out, why may we not say, that man,
if

if he were rehabilitate in the former state of pure nature, might, without any extraordinary assistance, foresee and prophesie? For, there is not such a distance betwixt that foresight and prophesie, as is betwixt the two states of innocency and corruption, according to the received notion, which men have settled to themselves of that primitive state of innocency.

From the same principle, may it likewise be deduced, that natural reason cannot but be an excellent mean, for knowing, as far as is possible, the glorious nature of God Almighty: He hath doubtless lighted this candle, that we might, by it, see Himself; and how can we better know the Seal, then by looking upon its impression. And if Religion and its mysteries, cannot be comprehended by reason, I confess it is a pretty jest, to hear such frequent reasonings amongst Churchmen, in matters of Religion. And albeit *faith* and *reason* be look'd upon as *Jacob* and *Esau*, whereof the younger only hath the blessing, and are, by Divines, placed at the two opposite points of the Diameter; yet upon a superficial inquiry,
it

it would appear by the Laws of his Country that *faith* is but sublimated reason, calcined by that divine Chymical fire of Baptisme; and that the soul of man hath lurking in it, all these vertues and faculties which we call Theological; such as *faith*, *hope* and *repentance*. for else David would not have prayed, *Inlighten Lord, my eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy Law*; but rather, *Lord, bestow new eyes upon me*. Neither could the opening of *Lydia's* heart, have been sufficient for her conversion, if these pre-existing qualities had not been treasur'd up there formerly: So that it would appear, that these holy flames lurk under the ashes of corruption, untill God, by the breath of His Spirit (and that wind which bloweth where it listeth) sweep them off: And that God, having once made man perfect in the first Creation, doth not in his regeneration super-add any new faculty (for else the soul had not at first been perfect) but only removes all obstructing impediments.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Faith and Reason.

I Am alwayes ashamed, when I hear reason called the step-mother of faith, and proclaimed rebell against God Almighty; and such declared traitors, as dare harbour it, or appear in it's defence. These are such fools as they who break their Prospects, because they bring not home to their sight the remotest objects; and are as unjust as *Jacob* had been, if he had divorced from *Leah*, because she was tender-eyed: whereas, we should not put out the eyes of our understanding, but should beg from God the eye-salve of His Spirit for their illumination. Nor should we dash the Prospect of our reason, against the Rocky walls of despair! but should rather wash its glasses with the tears of unfeigned repentance.

Ever since *faith* and *reason* have been, by Divines, set by the ears, the brutish multitude

multitude conclude, these who are most reasonable to be least religious; and the greatest spirits to be the least spiritual: a conceit most inconsistent with that divine parable, wherein those who received the many talents, improved them to the best advantage, whilst he who had but one, laid it up in a napkin. And it is most improbable, that God would choose low shrubs, and not tall Ceders, for the building of his glorious Temple. And it is remarkable, that God, in the old Law, refused to accept the first born of an asse in sacrifice, but not of any other creature. And some, who were content to be called *Atheists*, providing they were thought Wits, did take advantage in this of the *Rablers* ignorance, and authorized by their devilish invention, what was at first but a mistake: and this unriddles to us that mystery, why the greatest Wits are most frequently the greatest *Athiests*.

When I consider, how the Angels, who have no bodies, sinned before man; and that brutes, who are all body, sin not at all, but follow the pure dictates of nature;

I am induced to believe, that the body is rather unjustly blamed for being, then that really it is, the occasion of sin; and probably, the witty soul hath in this cunningly laid over upon its fellow, that wherewith it self is only to be charged. What influence can flesh and blood have upon that which immaterial? no more sure then the case hath upon the Watch, or the Heavens upon its burgesling Angels? And see we not, that when the soul hath bid the body adieu, it remains a carcass, fit nor able for nothing? I believe, that the body being a clog to it, may slow its pursute after objects, and that it may occasion, indirectly, some sins of omission: For, we see palpably, that eating and drinking dulls our devotions; but, I can never understand, how such dumb Orators, as flesh and blood, can perswade the soul to commit the least sin. And thus, albeit our Saviour sayes, that *flesh and blood did not teach Peter to give him his true Epithets*; neither indeed could it: Yet, our Saviour imputes not any actual sin to these pithless causes. And seeing
our

our first sin hath occasioned all our after-sinning, certainly, that which occasioned our first sin was the main source of sinning, and thus was doubtless the soul; for, our first sin being an immoderate desire of knowledge, was the effect and product of our spirit, because it was a spiritual sin; whereas if it had been gluttony, lust or such like, which seems corporeal, the body had been more to have been blamed for it. And in this contest, I am of opinion, that the soul wins the cause, because it is the best Orator.

C H A P. XV.

*Of the fall of Angels, and what
their sin was.*

WHat was the occasion of the first ill, is much debated (and most deservedly) amongst Moralists; for, that which was good could not produce that which was evil, seeing that which works mischief cannot be called good. Nor can

we ascribe the efficiency of the first evil to evil: for then the question recurs, what was the cause of that evil? And by this, the supposition is likewise destroyed, whereby the evil enquired after, is supposed to be the first evil: but, if we enquire, what could produce in the Angels that first sin, whereby they forfeited their glory? we will find this disquisition most mysterious, And it is commonly believed, but by what revelation I know not, that their pride caused their fall, and that they caught their bruise in climbing; in desiring to be equal to their Creator, they are become inferior to all their fellow Creatures. Yet, this seems to me, most strange, that these excellent spirits whose very substance was light, and who surpassed far, man, in capacity and understanding, should have so erred as to imagine, that equality feasible, a fancy which the fondest of men could not have entertained. And it were improbable to say, that their error could have sprouted at first from their understanding; and to think it to have been
so

so gross, as that fallen man doth now admire it: but, why may we not rather think, that their first error was rather a-crookedness in their will, then a blindness in their judgement, and that they fretted to see Man, whom they know to be inferiour to themselves by many stages made Lord of all that pleasant Creation, which they gazed on with a staring maze. And that this opinion is more probable, appears, because this Sin was the far more baiting, seeing it appeared with all the charmes, wherewith either pride, vanity or avarice could busk it; and explicats better to us the occasion of all that enmity with which that Serpent hath alwayes since persued silly man. But, whither God will save just as many believers as there are fell of the Angels, none can determine; neither can it be rationally deduced from that Scripture, *Statuit terminos genitum, juxta numerum Angelorum Dei*; But, if it please God so to order it, it will doubtless aggrage their punishment, by rackling their disdain.

And seeing the Angels have never obtained a remission for this crime, it is probable, that the *cor-
The sin of the An- gels was the sin a-
gains the holy Ghost.* is, in us, the sin against
the holy Ghost.

For, if their *lapse* had been pardon-
able, some one or other of them had in
all probability escaped ; but, if this
was not that unpardonable sin, I scarce see
where it shall be found. For, to say that
it is a hating of Good, as *God*, is to
make it unpracticable rather than un-
pardonable: For, all Creatures appetite
naturally what is good, and *God*, as
God, is good ; So that it is impossible that
He can be hated under that reduplica-
tion.

It may be likewise conjectured, that
voluntary and deliberate sacrilege is
the sin against the holy Ghost ; because
Ananias and *Saphira*, in with-holding
from the Church, a part of the price
for which they sold their lands, are, by
Peter, said to have lyed, not to man, but
to the holy Ghost, and his wife is
there said to have tempted the Spirit :
but

but, seeing both of them resolved to continue in the Church (a resolution inconsistent with the sin against the holy Ghost) And seeing many sins are more hainous, I cannot interpret this lying to the holy Ghost to be any thing else but a sin against light, in which most penitents have been involved; albeit, I confess, this was a gross escape, seeing it rob'd of God of His *omniscieny*, and supposed that He was not privy to such humane actings as have not the Sun for a witness. I do then conclude, that the sin against the holy Ghost may rather be a resolute undervaluing of God, and a scorning to receive a pardon from Him: and this is that which makes the Angels fall irrecoverable, and like the flaming sword, defends them from their re-entry into that Paradise from which they exile. And albeit to say, that the Angels rebellion flows from God's denying them repentance, may suit abundantly well with His unstainable justice; yet, it is hard to reconcile it with his mercy. And this makes my private judgement place the unpardonable-

donableness of this sin, not in God's Decree, but in their obduration and rebellious impenitency: And the reason why these who commit this sin are never pardoned, is, because a pardon is never sought. That place of Scripture, wherein *Esau* is said to have sought, the blessing with tears and not to have found it, astonishes me: Yet, I believe, that if his tears had streamed from a sense of his guilt more then of his punishment, doubtless he had not wept in vain; and in that he tear'd, he was no more to be pytied, far less pardoned, then a Malefactor, who upon the scaffold grants some few tears to the importunity of his torturs, but scornes to acknowledge the guilt of his crime; *for, pain by contracting our bodies, strains out that liquid matter, which thereafter globs it self in tears;* there could come no holy water from the pagan font of *Esau's* eyes; and if his remorse could have pierc'd his own heart, it had easily pierc'd Heaven. Whilst others admire, I bless God, that He hath closed up the knowledge of that unpardonable sin under

der his own privy Seal : for, seeing Satan tempts me to sin with the hopes of an after pardon, this bait is pull'd off his hook, by the fear I stand under, that the sin to which I am tempted, is that sin which can expect no pardon. And albeit it be customary amongst men to beacon and set a mark upon such shelves and rocks as destroy passengers; yet, that is only done where commerce is allowed and sayling necessary; But, seeing all sin is forbidden, God was not obliged to guard us with the knowledge of that sin, no further then by prohibiting us not to sin, but to stand in awe.

CHAP. XVI.

Of Mans fall.

THat first sin whereby our our first Parents forfeited their primitive excellencies was so pittiful a frailty, that I think we should rather lament, then enquire after it. To think that an apple had

had in it the seeds of all knowledge, or that it could assimilate him to his Creator, and could, in an instant, sublimiate his nature, was a frailty to be admired in one of his piety and knowledge. Yet, I admire not that the breach of so mean a Precept was punish'd with such appearing rigor, because, the easier the command was, the contempt was proportionally the greater; and the first crimes are by Legislators punished, not only for guilt, but for example: But I rather admire what could perswade the facile world to believe, that *Adam* was created, not only innocent, but even stored with all humane knowledge; For, besides that, we have no warrant from Scripture for this alledgiance, this his easie escape speaketh far otherwayes.

And albeit the Scripture tells us, that man was created perfect; yet, that inferrs not that man was furnished with all humane knowledge: For, his perfection consisted in his adoring of, and depending upon God, wherein we see those are exactest,
whose

whose judgments are least pestered with terrestrial knowledge, and least diverted with unnecessary speculations. And thus it appears, that these Sciences, after which his posterity pants, were not intended as noble *appanages* of that rational soul, but are rather toyish babies buskt up by faln man, whereby he diverts himself from reflecting too narrowly upon his native frailty. And thus Scripture tells us, *that God made man perfect, but that he sought out to Himself many inventions*; where perfection and invention seem to be stated as enemies; and it is palpable that these Sciences, which are by us lawrel'd and rewarded, are such as were inconsistent with that state of innocency, such as Law, Theology and Physick. And as for the rest, it is absur'd to think, that *Adams* happiness did consist in the knowledge of these things which we our selves account either impertinent or superfluous. But, that which convinces me most of this, is, that we forfeited nothing by *Adams* fall, which Christs death restores not to us; wherefore, seeing Christ by his

his own, or his Apostles promises, hath not assured us of any sub-lunary or school knowledge; or hath out experience taught us, that Sciences are entailed upon the Saints. I almost believe, that *Adam* neither possess these before, nor yet lost them by his fall. Neither think I St. *Paul* the more imperfect, that he desired to know nothing but Christ and him crucified: So that the difference betwixt *Adam* and his successors, stood more in the straightness of his affections, then in the depth of his knowledge. For, albeit it be believed that the names whereby he baptized the creature, were full histories of their natures written in short hand; yet, this is but a conjecture authorized by no holy Text. It is a more civill error in the Jewish Talmudists, to think that all the creatures were brought to *Adam*, to let him see that there were none amongst them fit to be his companion, nor none so beautifull as *Eve*, then it is in their Cabalists to observe, that the Hebrew word, signifying *man*, doth, by a transposition of letters, signifie likewise,

wayes, *benediction*; and the word signifying *woman*, makes up *malediction*. If we should take a character of *Adam's* knowledge from the Scriptures, we shall finde more imprudence charged upon him then upon any of his Successors: For, albeit the silly woman was not deceived without the help of subtilty, yet *Adam* sinned upon a bare suggestion, and thereafter was so simple, as to hide himself when God called him to an account, as if a thicket of trees could have sconced him from his all-seeing Maker; and when he was accused, was so simple, as to think his wives commands sufficient to exoner him, and so absurd, as to make God Himself sharer with him in his guilt, *the woman whom thou gavest me, &c.*

There is more charm in acquiring new knowledge, than in reflecting upon what we have already gain'd, (as if the species of known objects did corrupt, by being treasur'd up in our brains) And this induces me to believe, that our scantness of native knowledge, is rather a happiness then a punishment; the Citizens

zens of London or Paris are not so tickled by the sight of these stately Cities, as strangers who where not born within their walls; and I may say to such as by spelling the Starres desire to read the fortunes of others, as our Saviour said to Peter, when he was desirous to know the horoscope of the beloved Apostle, *What is that to thee?* What can it advantage us to know the correspondence kept amongst the Planets; and to understand the whole Anatomy of natures skeleton; in gazing upon whose parts, we are oftentimes as ridiculous as Children; who love to leaf over taliduce Pictures? for in both variety is all the usury that can be expected, as the return of our time and pains; and if we pry inly into this small mass of our present knowledge, we shall find, that our knowledge is one of the fertilest fountains of our misery: For, do not such as know that they are sick, groan more heavily then a Country Clown, who apprehends nothing till extremity create in him some sense? And doubtless the reason why children and ideots endure
more

more, and drunken men escape no dangers then others, because albeit they cannot provide such apt remedies, yet, they are less acquainted with what they feel then we are. Are not these who understand that they are affronted, more vex'd then such as are ignorant of these misfortunes? And these who foresee the changes and revolutions, which are to befall either their friends or their Countries, are thereby more sadly diseased, then he who sees no further then his nose. Our Saviour wept when He did foresee that one stone of *Jerusalem* should not be left upon another; and when *Hazael* askt *Elisha* why he wept, he told him, it was because he did foresee what mischief *Hazael* was to do in *Israel*. Let us not then complaine of the loss of *Adam's* knowledge, but of his innocency; we know enough to save us, and what is more then that, is superfluous.

Adam cannot be thought to have been the first sinner, for *Eve* sinned before him; So that albeit it seem a Paradox, yet it is most probable, that al-

beit *Adam* had for ever obtained from eating the forbidden fruit, his posterity had been still as miserable as now they are; seeing the guilt of either of the Parents had been sufficient to dash the innocence of the children. For, as the Scripture tells us, Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? And *David*, in that Text, which of all others speaks most expressly of original sin, layes the guilt upon her, and confesseth only, that his mother had conceived him in sin.

As *Adam* was not the first sinner, so the eating of the apple may be justly thought not to be the first sin; Eve having, before his eating the apple, repeated most falsely the Command. For, whereas God did assure them, that in that day they did eat the fruit they should surely dye: Eve relates it thus, Ye shall not eat the fruit lest ye dye, representing only that as a contingent which was most certain: and whereas God had only said, ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree, Eve sayes, God said, ye shall not touch it; which it may be furnished the serpent this argument to cheat her, Ye see God hath

hath deceived you, for the fruit may be touched without danger, why may it not be eaten without hazzard? and it is probable, that he hath failed in the one as well as in the other. But to abstract from this, it cannot be said, that the eating of the *forbidden fruit* was the first sin; for, before *Adam* did eat thereof, he belov'd both to believe the Serpent and mis-believe his Maker, and thus *mis-believe* was the first sin: For after he had credited the Serpents report, he was no longer innocent, and so he did not eat the apple till after his fall. What wiser are these Divines, who debate, whether *Adams* falling sickness and sin had become hereditary, if our predecessors had come out of his loines before he sinned, then those who combated for the largest share of the King of *Spaines* gold, if it had been to be divided?

In the Almighty's procedure against poor *Adam* for this crime, His infinite mercy appears to admiration; and God foreseeing, that man might sharpen the ax of justice too much upon the wheel.

stone of private revenge, seems to have, in this process, formed to him, an exact model of Inquisition. For, He arraigns and cries *Adam, Adam, where art thou?* He shews him his dictay, *Hast thou eat of the fruit whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?* He allows him exculpation, *Who told thee?* and in order thereto, did examine the woman, upon whom *Adam* did transfer the guilt. And albeit nothing could escape His omniscieny, and that He did see *Adam* eat the Apple, yet. to teach, Judges that they should walk according to what is proved, and not according to what they are themselves conscious to, He did not condemn him till first he should have a confession from his own mouth. And thus, *Gen. 18. 21.* the Lord sayes, *Because the cry of Sodom is great--- I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, &c.* And in the last place, albeit the fatal decree did hear, *In that day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely dye;* yet, were his dayes prolonged nine hundred and thirty years after the sin was committed.

It

It is too curious a disquisition to enquire how God can be said to be merciful, mercy being the mitigation of justice, of which His pure nature cannot be capable, seeing whatever He wills is just: And so He cannot be thought in any thing which He wills, to recede from justice, and so can no more properly be said to be merciful, then one Act can be both the Law and the mitigation of the Law. But I will press no point of this nature, knowing that humble modesty is the best Theology.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Stile of Genesies.

THe *Vatican* of Paganism cannot, for the maleness of it's stile, match that matchless Book of *Genesies*, whereof each sentence seems a quarry of rich meditations, and each word a spell, sufficient to conjure the Devil of *Delphos*. Might not that excellent expression, *Let us make man after our Image*, convince

any of the being of a Trinity, who deny plurality of Gods? It is wonderful, that the Saturn-humoured Jew can, in this passage, mis-take his own Saviour; and it is strange that he should not, from the triangular architecture of his own heart, conclude the Trinity of the God-head, whose temple it was appointed to be. Albeit I be an admirer of this nurse of Cabalism; yet, I approve not the conceit of these doting Rabbies, who teach that God from His own mouth, dited both the words and matter of the *Pentateuch*; whereas, He furnished only to the other Prophets the matter and subject unphrased: for, not only did God promise, that he should put His words in their mouths, but likeways, they preface thus their own prophecies, In the dayes of such a King, the Word of the Lord came to such a Prophet, saying, &c. Neither is this conceit consistent with that high esteem, which they, (even in this) intend for their patron, *Moses*; seeing it allows him less trust from his divine Master, then the other Penmen of Scripture had reposed in them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Why Man fell.

THat brain hath too little *placatur*,
that is too curious to know why
God, who evidence so great a desire to
save poor man, and is so powerful, as that
his salvation needed never have run the
hazzard, if His infinit wisdome had so de-
cree'd, did yet suffer him to fall: For,
if we enter once the list of that debate,
our reason is too weak to bear the bur-
den of so great a difficulty. And albeit
it may be answered, that God might
have restrained man, but that restraint
did not stand with the freedome of mans
will which God had bestowed upon
him; yet, this answer stops not the mouth
of the difficulty, For certainly if one
should detain a mad man from running o-
ver a precipice, he could not be thereby
said to have wronged his liberty; and
seeing man is by many Divines allowed a
freedom of will, albeit he must of necessity

do what is evil, and that his freedom is salv'd by a liberty to choose only one of moe evils, it would appear strange why his liberty might not have consisted well enough with a moral impossibility of sinning, and might not have been abundantly conserved in his freedom to choof one of moe goods: yet, these reasons are the calling God to an account, and so impious. For, if God had first created man surrounded with our present infirmities, could we have complained? Why then should we now complain, seeing we are but saln to a better estate then we deserved; seeing we stumbled not so want of light; but because we extinguish'd our own light; and seeing our Saviours dying for us may yet re-instate us in happier estate then that from which we are now saln?

Albeit the glafs of my years hath not yet turn'd five and twenty, yet the curiosity I have to know the different *limbo's* of departed soules, and to view the card of the region of death, would give me abundance of courage to encounter this King of terrors, though I were a Pagan:

But,

But, when I consider what joys are prepared for them who fear the Almighty, and what craziness attends such as sleep in *Methusalems* Cradle, I pity them who make long-life one of the ofttest repeated Petitions of their *Pater-noster*; and yet these sure are the more advanc'd in folly, who desire to have their names enshrind after death in the airy monument of fame: Whereas it is one of the promises made to the Elect, *That they shall rest from their labours, and their works shall follow them.* Most mens mouths are so foul, that it is a punishment to be much in them: for my own part, I desire the same good offices from my good name that I do from my cloathes, which is to skreen me from the violence of exterior accidents.

As these Criminals might be judg'd distracted, who being condemned to die, would spend their short reprival in disputing about the situation and fabrick of their gibbets; So may I justly think these *literati* mad, who spend the short time allotted them for Repentance, in debating about the seat of Hell,
and

and the torments of tortur'd spirits; To satisfy my curiosity, I was once resolv'd, with the Platonick, to take the promise of some dying friend, that he should return and satisfy me in all my private doubts concerning hell and heaven; yet I was justly afraid, that he might have returned me the same answer which *Abraham* return'd to *Dives*, *Have they not Moses and the Prophets?* if they hear not them, wherefore will they be perswaded though one should rise from the dead.

CHAP. XIX.

A Refutation of the Millenarians.

THE *Millenar's Ephimerides*, which assure us, that Christ shall reign a thousand years with the Saints on earth, is as sensual an opinion as that of the *Turks* who make heaven a brothel, wherein we shall satisfy our Venereous appetites; for the one shews the vain glory and vindictive humour of the Saints, as palpably as the other shew the lusts of the *Mahametans*.

Mahametans. If Christs reigning so many years be for convincing the world that he is the real *Messiah*, their heresie should have ante-dated his coming; and his reign should rather have begun long since, when many ages were to be converted, or at least it should not have been thrust out upon the salvege and border of time, when very few shall remain to be convinc'd: and if in this they intend a displaying of Christs glory, certainly they are mistaken; for what honour can it be for a King, to have his foot-stool made his Throne? So that I think, these poor Phanaticks have taken the patronage of this error rather by necessity then choice, all other opinions and conceits being formerly preengaged to other Authors.

CHAP.

C H A P. XX.

The Author's Censure of this Essay, and an account of his Design.

AS I am not able, by the *Jacob's-ladder* of my merits to scale Heaven, so am I less able, by the *Jacob's-staffe* of my private ability, to take up the true altitude of its mysteries. I have travell'd no further in Theology then a *Sabbath-days* journey; and therefore, it were arrogance in me to offer a map of it to the credulous world: But, if I were worthy to be consulted in these spiritual-securities, I should advise every private Christian, rather to stay still in the barge of the Church with the other Disciples, then by an ill bildled zeal, to hazard drowning alone with *Peter*, by offering to walk upon the unstable surface of his own fleeting and water-weak fancies, though with a pious resolution to meet our Saviour. For, albeit one may be a real Christian, and yet differ from the Church, which sayes, that

that the Wise men who came to bow before our Saviours Cradle-throne, were three Kings, and in such other opinions as these, wherein the fundamentals of faith and quiet of the Church are no ways concerned; yet certainly, he were no wise man himself, nor yet sound Christian, who would not even in these bow the flag of his private opinion to the commands of the Church. The Church is our Mother, and therefore we should wed no opinion without her consent who is our Parent; or if we have rashly wedded any, it is in the power of the Church and her Officials to grant us a divorce. As for my self, my vanity never prompted me to be standard-bearer to any, either new Sect, or old Heresie; and I pittie such as love to live like Pew-keepers in the House of God, busied in seating others, without ever providing a room for themselves. If there be any thing in this Discourse which may offend such as are really pious, it shall much grieve me, who above all men honour them most. What I have spoken against cases of Conscience and the like, strikes not against
their

their Christian fellowship and correspondence; but against the apish toppe-
ries of pretended counterfeits. It shall
alwayes be my endeavour for the future,
rather to drop tears for my own sins and
the sins of others, then yrk for their con-
version: our prayers help such as never
heard them; whereas these only who
read our discourses are better'd by them.
Abrahams prayers prevailed more with
God (even for *Sodom*) then *Lot's* reite-
rated Sermons; and no wonder that the
success be unequal, seeing in the one we
have to do with a merciful God, where-
as in the other we must perswade a hard-
hearted people.

I intend not to purchase from poste-
rity the title of *Reformer*; seeing most of
these have lain under the same guilt; and
have had the same face, with that curi-
ous Painter, who having drawn an excel-
lent face, as happily as could have been
expected from the smoothest mirror,
did the water dash it afresh upon the
suggestion of each inmate, till at last he
reformed it from being any way like to
the Original.

Divinity

Divinity differs in this from all other Sciences, that these being invented by mortals, receive growth from time and experience; whereas, it being penn'd by the omainscient Spirit of God, can receive no addition without receiving prejudice. It is most remarkable, that our Saviours Prayers, His Sermons and the *Creed*, delivered to us by his Apostles, were roomed up in farr narrower bounds then these of our times, which an hydropic of ill concocted opinions hath swell'd beyond their true dimensions: many whereof have either been brooded by vanity or *interest*; or else ignorant and violent defendents being brought to a bay, by such as impugn'd their resolv'd-upon principles, have been forc'd to assert these by-blow and preter-intentional *tenets*; and having once floored them, have thereafter judg'd themselves concerned to defend them, in point of Scholastick honour. Some well-meaning Christians likewayes, do sometimes for maintenance of what is lawfull and pious, think, that they may lawfully advance opinions, which otherwayes they would

would never have allowed of; and as in nature we see, that the collision of two hard bodies makes them rebound so much the further from one another: So opposition makes both parties fly into extremities. Thus I believe, that the debate betwixt *Roman-Catholicks* and *Protestants*, concerning the *Virgin Mary*, have occasion'd in some amongst both, expressions, if not heretical, yet at least undecent. Thus a great many *Confessions of Faith* become, like *Noahs Ark*, a receptacle of clean and unclean: and which is also deplorable, they do, like ordinary *Dyals*, serve only for use in that one meridian for which they are calculated, and by riding twenty miles ye make them heterodox. I speak not this to the disparagement of our own Church, (which I reverence in all its Precepts and Practices) but to beget a blushing conviction in such as have diverted from it; and whose Conventicles, compared with our *Jerusalem*, resemble only the removed huts of those who live apart, because they are sick of the Plague.

I am not at a maze, to see men so tenacious of contrary principles in Religion; for, man's thoughts being vast and various, he snatches at every offered suggestion, and if by accident he entertain any of these many, as a divine immission, he thereafter thinks it were blasphemy to bring that thought to the test of *reason*, because he hears that *faith* is above *reason*; or to relinquish it, because the common suffrage of his Country runs it counter, seeing he is taught even by them, that the principals of *belief* must not be chosen by the Pole.

And seeing *faith* is above *reason*, (albeit, as I said formerly, it would seem otherwise) I wonder not to see even the best temper'd Christians, think that which is not their own religion to be therefore ridiculous.

My design all alongst this Discourse, butts at the one principal, that *Sperulations in Religion* not are so necessary, and are more dangerous then *sincere practice*. It is in Religion as in Herauldry, the simpler the bearing be, it is so much the purer and the ancienter. I will not say that our School-distinctions are the impres-

fions of the devils cloven foot; but I may say, that our piety and principles scarce ever grow after they begin to fork in such dichotomies; which, like *Jacob* and *Esau*, divide and jar as soon as they are born, and betwixt whom, the poor proposition, out of which both did spring, is like a malefactor, most lamentably drag'd to pieces. I have endeavour'd to demonstrate, that dogmaticalness and paralytick scepticism, are but the *Apo-crypha* of true Religion; and I believe the one begets the other, as a toad begets a cockatrice: For the Septick perceiving, that the magisterial Dogmatist erres (as these must erre somewhere who assert too much) even in these things whereof he affirms, he is as sure as of any principle in Religion, (which is their ordinary stile) he finding out their error in one of their principles, is thereby emboldened to contravert all. This being the scope of this Essay, I wish that these who read it would expound it as Divines do parables, *Que non sunt argumentativa ultra suum scopum.*

CHAP. XXI.

The Authors Apology.

I Doubt not but some will think me no less absurd in writing against vanity, whilst I am so vain^m my self as to write Books, then the Philosophers were judg'd of old, for denyiug motion whilst their tongues mov'd in their cheeks; but, to these my answer shall be, that finding many groveling in their errors, I have, in this Essay, proffer'd them my assistance, not to shew my strength but my *compassion*. The multitude (which albeit it hath ever been allowed many heads, yet was never allowed any brains) will doubtless accuse my Studies of adultery, for hugging contemplations so excentrick to my employment; to these my return is, that these papers are but the pairings of my other Studies, and because they were but pairings, I have flung them out into the streets. I wrote them in my retirements when I wanted both books and employment, and I resolve that this shall be the

last inroad I shall ever make into forreign contemplations. There are some thoughts in this piece which may seem to rebell against the empire of the Schooles; yet, who knows but my watch goes right, albeit it agree not with the publick Clock of the City, especially where the sun of Righteousness hath not, by pointing clearly the dial of Faith, shewed which of the two are in the error? There are some expressions in it, which censure may force to speak otherwayes then they have in commission; yet none of them got room in this Discourse, untill they first gave an account of their design to a most pious and learned Divine: and, so, it maybe the lines are of themselves straight, albeit they lye not parrelled with each censurers crooked rule. As this Discourse intends, for the Divines of our Church, all respect; so all that is in it, is most freely submitted to their censure.

The Author intended this Discourse only as an introduction to the Stoicks Morals, but probably, he will, for many years, stop here.

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